

T H E  
W O R K S  
O F  
JAMES THOMSON.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

*Juliana Peck - 1843 -*

CONTAINING,

SOPHONISBA.

AGAMEMNON.

ALFRED.

EDWARD and ELEONORA,

TANCRED and SIGISMUNDA,

AND

CORIOLANUS.

DUBLIN:

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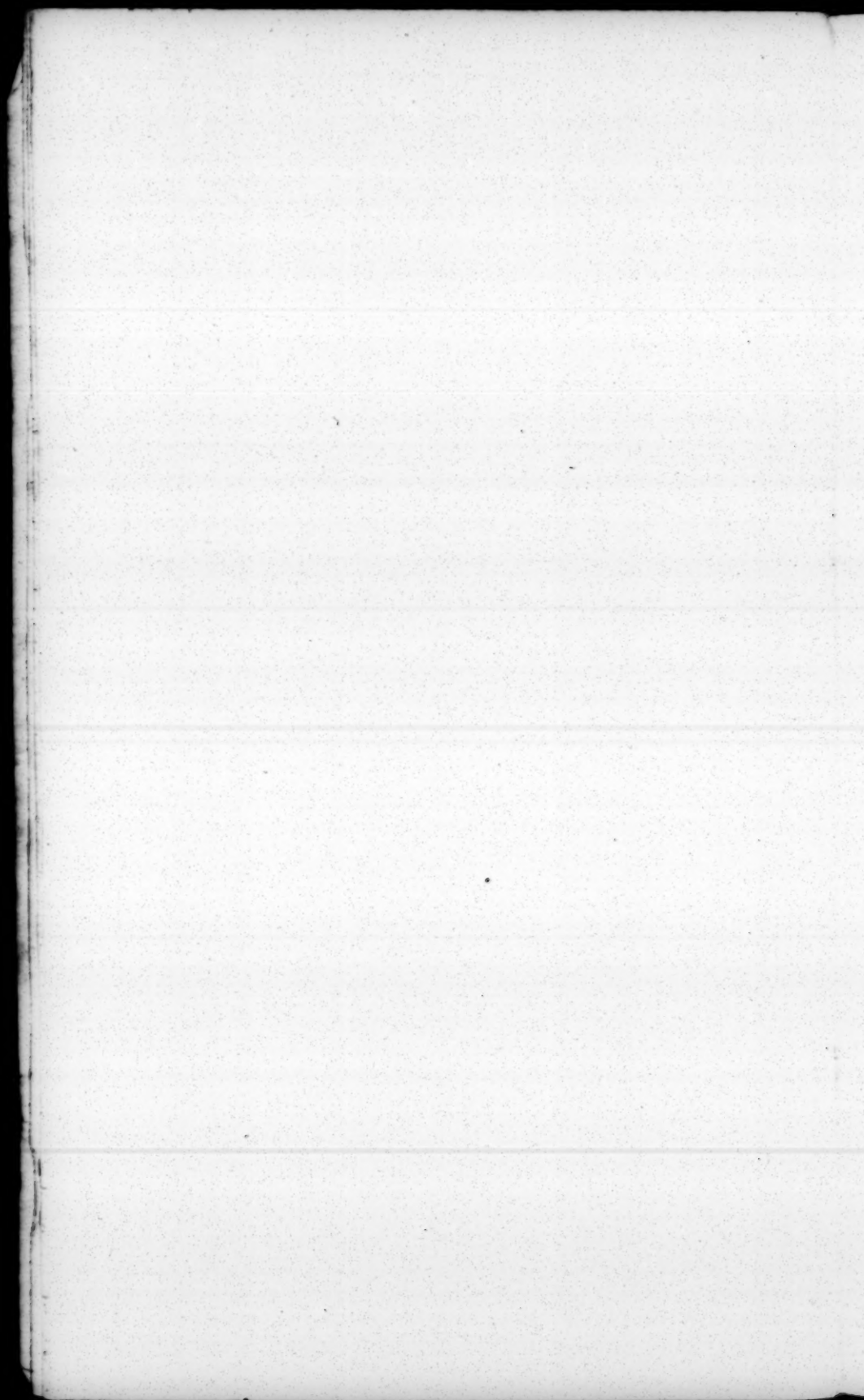




*SOPHONISBA.*

A

TRAGEDY.



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TO THE  
QUEEN.

MADAM,

THE notice, your MAJESTY has condescended to take of the following *Tragedy*, emboldens me to lay it, in the humblest manner, at your MAJESTY's feet. And to whom can this illustrious *Carthaginian* so properly fly for protection, as to a QUEEN, who commands the hearts of a *people*, more powerful at sea than *Carthage*? more flourishing in *commerce* than those *first merchants*? more secure against conquest? and, under a *Monarchy*, more free than a *Commonwealth* itself?

I dare not, nor indeed need I, here attempt a character where both the great and the amiable qualities shine forth in full perfection. All words are

## DEDICATION.

faint to speak what is universally felt,  
and acknowledged, by a happy people.  
Permit me therefore only to subscribe  
myself, with the truest zeal and veneration,

MADAM,

*Your* MAJESTY's

*Most humble,*

*Most dutiful,*

*And most devoted*

*Servant,*

JAMES THOMSON.



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# P R E F A C E.

**I**T is not my intention, in this preface, to defend any faults that may be found in the following piece. I am afraid there are too many; But those who are best able to discover, will be most ready to pardon them. They alone know how difficult an undertaking the writing of a tragedy is: and this is a first attempt.

I beg leave only to mention the reason that determined me to make choice of this subject. What pleased me particularly, tho' perhaps it will not be least liable to objection with ordinary readers, was the great simplicity of the story. It is one, regular, and uniform, not charged with a multiplicity of incidents, and yet affording several revolutions of fortune; by which the passions may be excited, varied, and driven to their full tumult of emotion.

This unity of design was always sought after, and admired by the ancients: and the most eminent among the moderns, who understood their writings, have chosen to imitate them in this, from an intire conviction that the reason of it must hold good in all ages. And here allow me to translate a Passage from the celebrated Monsieur Racine, which contains all that I have to say on this head.

“ We must not fancy that this rule has no other foundation but the caprice of those who made it. Nothing  
“ can touch us in tragedy, but what is probable. And  
“ what probability is there, that, in one Day, should  
“ happen a multitude of things, which could scarce happen in several Weeks? There are some who think that  
“ this simplicity is a mark of barrenness of invention.  
“ But they do not consider, that, on the contrary, invention consists of making something out of nothing: and  
“ that this buddle of incidents has always been the refuge of Poets, who did not find in their genius either  
“ richness or force enough to engage their spectators, for  
“ five

## P R E F A C E.

*"five acts together, by a simple action, supported by the  
"violence of passions, the beauty of sentiments, and the  
"nobleness of expression."---I would not be understood to  
mean that all these things are to be found in my perform-  
ance: I only shew the reader what I aimed at, and how  
I would have pleased him, had it been in my power.*

*As to the character of Sophonisba; in drawing it, I  
have confined myself to the truth of history. It were an  
affront to the age, to suppose such a character out of na-  
ture; especially in a country which has produced so many  
great examples of public spirit and heroic virtues, even  
in the softer sex: and I had destroyed her character in-  
tirely, had I not marked it with that strong love to her  
country, disdain of servitude, and inborn aversion to the  
Romans, by which all historians have distinguished her.  
Nor ought her marrying Masinissa, while her former  
husband was still alive, to be reckoned a blemish in her  
character. For, by the laws both of Rome and Car-  
thage, the captivity of the Husband dissolved the mar-  
riage of course; as among us impotence, or adultery; not  
to mention the reasons of a moral and public nature,  
which I have put into her own mouth in the scene betwixt  
her and Syphax.*

*This is all I have to say of the play itself. But I can-  
not conclude without owning my obligations to those con-  
cerned in the representation. They have indeed done me  
more than justice. Whatever was designed as amiable  
and engaging in Masinissa shines out in Mr. Wilks's  
action. Mrs. Oldfield, in the character of Sophonisba,  
has excelled what, even in the fondness of an author, I  
could either wish or imagine. The grace, dignity, and  
happy variety of her action have been universally ap-  
plauded, and are truly admirable.*

P R O-

# PROLOGUE.

By a FRIEND.

Spoken by Mr. WILLIAMS.

**W**HEN Learning, after the long Gothic night,  
Fair, o'er the western world, renew'd its light,  
With arts arising Sophonisba rose:

The tragic muse, returning, wept her woes.

With her th' Italian scene first learn'd to glow;

And the first Tears for her were taught to flow.

Her charms the Gallic muses next inspir'd:

Corneille himself saw, wonder'd, and was fir'd.

What foreign theatres with pride have shewn,  
Britain, by juster title, makes her own.

When Freedom is the cause, 'tis hers to fight;

And hers, when Freedom is the theme, to write.

For this a British Author bids again

The heroine rise, to grace the British scene.

Here, as in life, she breathes her genuine flame:

She asks what bosom has not felt the same?

Asks of the British Youth---Is silence there?

She dares to ask it of the British Fair.

To-night, our home-spun author would be true,

At once, to nature, history and you.

Well-pleas'd to give our neighbours due applause,

He owns their learning but disdains their laws.

Not to his patient touch, or happy flame,

'Tis to his British heart he trusts for fame.

If France excel him in one free-born thought,

The man, as well as poet, is in fault.

Nature! informer of the poet's art,

Whose force alone can raise or melt the heart,

Thou art his guide; each passion, every line,

Whate'er he draws to please must all, be thine.

Be thou his judge: in every candid breast,

Thy silent whisper is the sacred test.

## The PERSONS represented.

|                                      |        |                         |
|--------------------------------------|--------|-------------------------|
| MASINISSA, King of <i>Maffylia</i> , | } by } | Mr. <i>Wilks</i> .      |
| SYPHAX, King of <i>Maffylia</i> ,    |        | Mr. <i>Mills</i> .      |
| NARVA, Friend to <i>Masinissa</i> ,  |        | Mr. <i>Roberts</i> .    |
| SCIPIO, the <i>Roman</i> General,    |        | Mr. <i>Williams</i> .   |
| LÆLIUS, his Lieutenant,              |        | Mr. <i>Bridgwater</i> . |
| SOPHONISBA,                          |        | Mrs. <i>Oldfield</i> .  |
| PHOENISSA, her Friend,               |        | Mrs. <i>Roberts</i> .   |

Messenger, Slave, Guards, and Attendants.

## S C E N E

The Palace of *CIRTHA*.



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# SOPHONISBA.

A

## TRAGEDY.

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### ACT I. SCENE I.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA.

SOPHONISBA.

**T**HIS hour, *Phœnissa*, this important hour,  
Or fixes me a queen, or from a throne  
Throws *Sophonista* into *Roman* chains.

Detested thought ! For now his utmost force  
Collected, desperate, distress'd, and sore  
From battles lost ; with all the rage of war,  
Ill-fated *Syphax* his last effort makes.

But say, thou partner of my hopes, and fears,  
*Phœnissa*, say ; while from the lofty tower,  
Our straining eyes the field of battle fought,  
Ah, thought you not that our *Numidian* troops  
Gave up the bloody field, and scattering fled,  
Wild o'er the hills, from the rapacious sons  
Of still triumphant *Rome* ?

*Phœn.* Perhaps they wheel'd,  
As is their custom, to return more fierce.  
Distrust not fortune, while you yet may hope ;  
And think not, madam, *Syphax* can resign,  
But with his ebbing life, in this last field,  
At once a kingdom, and a queen he loves



Beyond ambition's brightest wish ; for whom,  
 Nor mov'd by threats, nor bound by plighted faith,  
 He scorn'd the *Roman* friendship (that fair name  
 For slavery) and from th' engagements broke  
 Of *Scipio*, fam'd for every winning art,  
 The towering Genius of recover'd *Rome*.

*Soph.* O name him not! These *Romans* stir my blood  
 To too much rage. I cannot bear the fortune  
 Of that proud people.---Said you not *Phænissa*,  
 That *Syphax* lov'd me ; which would fire his soul,  
 And urge him on to death or conquest ? True,  
 He loves me with the madness of desire ;  
 His every passion is a slave to love ;  
 Nor heeds he danger where I bid him go,  
 Nor leagues, nor interest. Hence these endless wars,  
 These ravag'd countries, these successless fights,  
 Sustain'd for *Carthage* ; whose defence alone,  
 Not love, engag'd my marriage-vows with his.  
 But know you not, that in the *Roman* camp  
 I have a lover too ; a gallant, brave,  
 And disappointed lover, full of wrath,  
 Returning to a kingdom, whence the sword  
 Of *Syphax* drove him ?

*Phæn.*

*Masiniſſa ?*

*Soph.*

He :

Young *Masiniſſa*, the *Maſſylian* king,  
 The first addresser of my youth ; for whom  
 My bosom felt a fond beginning wish,  
 Extinguish'd soon ; when once by *Scipio*'s arts  
 Won over, he became the slave of *Rome*.  
 E'er since, my heart has held him in contempt ;  
 And thrown out each idea of his worth,  
 That there began to grow : nay had it been  
 As much enthrall'd, and soft, as her's who sits  
 In secret shades, or by the falling stream,

And

And wastes her being in unutter'd pangs,  
I would have broke, or cur'd it of its fondness.

*Phæn.* Heroic *Sophonisba*!

*Soph.*

No, *Phænissa*;

It is not for the daughter of great *Asdrubal*,  
Descended from a long illustrious line  
Of *Carthaginian* heroes, who have oft  
Fill'd *Italy* with terror and dismay,  
And shook the walls of *Rome*, to pine in love,  
Like a deluded maid; to give her life,  
And heart high-beating in her country's cause,  
To mean domestic cares, and idle joys,  
Much less to one who stoops his neck to *Rome*,  
An enemy to *Carthage*, *Masfinissa*.

*Phæn.* Think not I mean to check that glorious  
flame,

That just ambition which exalts your soul,  
Glow on your cheek, and lightens in your eye.  
Yet would he had been yours, this rising prince!  
For, trust me, Fame is fond of *Masfinissa*.  
His courage, conduct, deep-experienc'd youth,  
And vast unbroken spirit in distress,  
Still rising stronger from the last defeat,  
Are all the talk and terror too of *Afric*.

Who has not heard the story of his woes?  
How hard he came to his paternal realm:  
Whence soon by *Syphax*'s unrelenting hate,  
And jealous *Carthage* driven, he with a few  
Fled to the mountains. Then, I think, it was,  
Hem'd in a circle of impending rocks,  
That all his followers fell, save fifty horse;  
Who, thence escap'd thro' secret paths abrupt,  
Gain'd the *Clupean* plain. There overtook,  
And urg'd by fierce surrounding foes, he burst  
With four alone, fore wounded, thro' their ranks,  
And all amidst a deep-swoln torrent plung'd.

Seiz'd

Seiz'd with the whirling gulph, two sunk ; and two,  
 With him obliquely hurried down the stream,  
 Swam to the farther shore. Th' astonish'd foes  
 Stood check'd and shivering on the gloomy brink,  
 And deem'd him lost in the devouring flood.  
 Mean time the dauntless, undespairing youth  
 Lay in a cave conceal'd ; curing his wounds  
 With mountain-herbs, and on his horses fed :  
 Nor here, even at the lowest ebb of life,  
 Stoop'd his aspiring mind. What need I say,  
 How once again restor'd, and once again  
 Expell'd, among the *Garamantian* hills  
 He since has wander'd, till the *Roman* arm  
 Reviv'd his cause ? and who shall reign alone,  
*Syphax* or he, this day decides.

*Soph.*

Enough.

Thou need'st not blazon thus his fame, *Phœnissa*.  
 Were he as glorious as the pride of woman  
 Could wish, in all her wantonness of thought ;  
 The joy of humankind ; wise, valiant, good ;  
 With every praise, with every laurel crown'd ;  
 The warrior's wonder, and the virgin's sigh :  
 Yet this would cloud him o'er, this blemish all,  
 His mean submission to the *Roman* yoke ;  
 That false to *Carthage*, *Afric*, and himself,  
 With proffer'd hand and knee, he hither led  
 These ravagers of earth.----But while we talk,  
 The work of fate goes on ; even now perhaps  
 My dying country bleeds in every vein,  
 And the proud victor thunders at our gate.

S C E N E

# SOPHONISBA.

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## SCENE II.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA, and to them a MESSENGER from the Battle.

*Soph.* Ha! whence art thou? Speak, tho' thy  
bleeding wounds  
Might well excuse thy tongue.

*Mess.* Madam escap'd,  
From yon dire field, alas! I come----

*Soph.* No more.  
At once thy meaning flashes o'er my soul.  
Oh all my vanish'd hopes! oh fatal chance  
Of undiscerning war!---And is all lost?  
An universal ruin?

*Mess.* Madam, all.  
Of all our numerous host scarce one is saved.  
The King---

*Soph.* Ah! what of him?

*Mess.* His fiery steed,  
By *Masfinissa*, the *Massylian* prince,  
Pierc'd, threw him headlong to his clustering foes;  
And now he comes in chains.

*Soph.* Oh worst of ills!  
Absolute gods! All *Afric* is in chains!  
The weeping world in chains!---Oh is there not  
A time, a righteous time, reserv'd in fate,  
When these oppressors of mankind shall feel  
The miseries they give; and blindly fight  
For their own fetters too?---The conquering troops,  
How points their motion?

*Mess.* At my heels they came,  
Loud-shouting, dreadful in a cloud of dust,  
By *Masfinissa* headed.

*Soph.* Hark! arriv'd.  
The murmuring croud rolls frightened to the palace.  
Thou



Thou bleed'st to death poor faithful wretch, away,  
 And dress thy wounds, if life be worth thy care;  
 Tho' *Rome*, methinks will lose a slave in thee.  
 Would *Sophonisba* were as near the verge  
 Of boundless, and immortal liberty!

## S C E N E III.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA.

[*After a Pause.*]

*Soph.* And wherefore not? When liberty is lost,  
 Let abject cowards live; but in the brave  
 It were a treachery to themselves, enough  
 To merit chains. And is it fit for me,  
 Who in my veins, from *Asdrubal* deriv'd,  
 Hold *Carthaginian* enmity to *Rome*;  
 Who sold my joyless youth to *Syphax*' arms,  
 For her destruction; is it fit for me  
 To sit in feeble grief, and trembling wait  
 Th' approaching victor's rage; reserv'd in chains  
 To grace his triumph, and become the scorn  
 Of every *Roman* Dame---Gods! how my soul  
 Disdains the thought! This, this shall set it free.

[*Offers to stab herself.*]

*Phæn.* Hold, *Sophonisba*, hold! my friend! my  
 queen!

For whom alone I live! hold your rash hand,  
 Nor thro' your guardian bosom stab your country.  
 That is our last resort, and always sure.  
 The gracious gods are liberal of death;  
 To that last blessing lend a thousand ways.  
 Think not I'd have you live to drag a chain,  
 And walk the triumph of insulting *Rome*.  
 No, by these tears of loyalty and love!  
 E're I beheld so vile a sight, this hand  
 Should urge the faithful ponyard to your heart,

And



And glory in the deed. But, while hope lives,  
Let not the generous die. 'Tis late before  
The brave despair.

*Soph.* Thou copy of my soul!  
And now my friend indeed! Shew me but hope,  
One glimpse of hope, and I'll renew my toils,  
Call patience, labour, fortitude again,  
The vext unjoyous day, and sleepless night;  
Nor shrink at danger, any shape of death,  
Shew me the smallest hope! Alas, *Phænissa*,  
Too fondly confident! Hope lives not here,  
Fled with her sister Liberty beyond  
The *Caramantian* hills, to some steep wild,  
Some undiscover'd country, where the foot  
Of *Roman* cannot come.

*Phar.* Yes, there she liv'd  
With *Masnissa* wounded and forlorn,  
Amidst the serpents hiss, and tigers yell. ---

*Soph.* Why nam'st thou him?

*Phæn.* Madam, in this forgive  
My forward zeal; from him proceeds our hope.  
He lov'd you once; nor is your form impair'd,  
Time has matur'd it into stronger charms:  
Ask his protection from the *Roman* power,  
You must prevail; for *Sophonisba* sure  
From *Masnissa* cannot ask in vain.

*Soph.* Now, by the prompting Genius of my  
country!

I thank thee for the thought. True, there is pain  
Ev'n in descending thus to beg protection  
From that degenerate youth. But, oh! for thee,  
My sinking country, and again to gaul  
This hated *Rome*, what would I not endure?  
It shall be done, *Phænissa*; tho' disgust  
Hold back my struggling heart, it shall be done.

But hark: they come; in this disordered tumult

It

It fits not *Sophonisba* to be seen.

I'll wait a calmer hour.---Let us retire.

SCENE IV.

MASINISSA, SYPHAX in Chains, NARVA, Guards, &c.

*Syphax*. Is there no dungeon in this city, dark,  
As is my troubled soul? That thus I'm brought  
To my own palace, to those rooms of state,  
Wont in another manner to receive me,  
With other signs of royalty than these.

(*looking on his chains.*)

*Mas*. I will not wound thee, nor insult thee, *Syphax*,  
With a recital of thy tyrant crimes.  
A captive here I see thee, fallen below  
My most revengeful wish; and all the rage,  
The noble fury that this morn inflam'd me,  
Is sunk to soft compassion. In the field,  
The perilous front of war, there is the scene  
Of brave revenge; and I have fought thee there,  
Keen as the wounded lyon seeks his foe.  
But when a broken enemy, disarm'd,  
And helpless lies; a falling sword, an eye  
With pity flowing, and an arm as weak  
As infant softness, then becomes the brave.

Believe it, *Syphax*, my relenting soul  
Melts at thy fate.

*Syphax*. This, this, is all I dread,  
All I detest, this insolence refin'd,  
This affectation of superior goodness.  
Pitied by thee!--Is there a form of death,  
Of torture, and of infamy like that?  
Ye partial gods, to what have you debas'd me?  
I feel your worst; why should I fear you more?

Hear me, vain youth! take notice---I abhor  
Thy mercy, loath it.---Use me like a slave;

As

As I would thee, (delicious thought!) wert thou  
Here crouching in my power.

*Maf.*

Outrageous man!

Thou can'st not drive me, by thy bitterest rage  
To an unmanly deed; not all thy wrongs,  
Can force my patient soul to stain its virtue.

*Syphax.* I cannot wrong thee. When we drive the  
spear

Into the monster's heart, to crush the serpent;  
Can that be call'd a wrong? 'Tis self-defence.

*Maf.* I'm loth to hurt thee more.----The tyrant  
works

Too fierce already in thy rankled breast.  
But since thou seem'st to rank me with thyself,  
With great destroyers, with perfidious kings;  
I must reply to thy licentious tongue,  
Bid thee remember, whose accursed sword  
Began this work of death; who broke the ties,  
The holy ties, attested by the gods,  
Which bind the nations in the bond of peace;  
Who meanly took advantage of my youth,  
Unskill'd in arms, unsettled on my throne,  
And drove me to the desert, there to dwell  
With kinder monsters; who my cities sack'd,  
My country pillag'd, and my subjects murder'd;  
Who still pursu'd me with inveterate hate,  
When open force prov'd vain, with ruffian arts,  
The villain's dagger, base assassination.  
And for no reason all. Brute violence  
Alone thy plea.---What the least provocation,  
Say, canst thou but pretend?

*Syphax.*

I needed none,

*Nature* has in my being sown the seeds  
Of enmity to thine.---Nay mark me this;  
Couldst thou restore me to my former state,  
Strike off these chains, give me my crown again;

Yet

Yet must I still, implacable to thee,  
 Seek eagerly thy death, or die myself.  
 Life cannot hold us both!---Unequal gods!  
 Who love to disappoint mankind, and take  
 All vengeance to yourselves; why to the point  
 Of my long-flatter'd wishes did ye lift me;  
 Then sink me down so low? Just as I aim'd  
 The glorious stroke that was to make me happy :  
 Why did you blast my strong extended arm?  
 But that to mock us is your cruel sport?  
 What else is human life?

*Maf.*

Thus always join'd

With an inhuman heart, and brutal manners,  
 Is irreligion to the ruling gods;  
 Whose schemes our peevish ignorance arraigns,  
 Our thoughtless pride.---Thy lost condition, *Syphax*,  
 Is nothing to the tumult of thy breast.  
 There lies the sting of evil, there the drop  
 That poisons nature.---Ye mysterious powers!  
 Whose ways are ever-gracious, ever just,  
 As ye think wisest, best, dispose of me;  
 But, whether thro' your gloomy depths I wander,  
 Or on your mountains walk; give me the calm  
 The steady, smiling soul; where wisdom sheds,  
 Eternal sunshine and eternal peace.  
 Then, if misfortune comes, she brings along  
 The bravest virtues. And so many great  
 Illustrious spirits have convers'd with woe,  
 Have in her school been taught, as are enough  
 To consecrate distress, and make Ambition  
 Even with the frown beyond the smile of Fortune.

*Syphax.* Torture and racks! This is the common  
 trick

Of insolent success, unsuffering pride,  
 This prate of patience, and I know not what.  
 'Tis all a lie, impracticable rant;

And



And only tends to make me scorn thee more.

But why this talk? In mercy send me hence;  
Yet---ere I go---Oh save me from distraction!  
I know, hot youth, thou burnest for my queen;  
But by the majesty of ruin'd kings,  
And that commanding glory which surrounds her,  
I charge thee touch her not!

*Maf.* No, *Syphax*, no,  
Thou need'st not charge me. That were mean  
indeed,

A triumph that to thee. But could I stoop  
Again to love her; Thou, what right hast thou,  
A captive, to her bed? Thy bonds divorce  
And free her from thy power. All laws in this,  
*Roman* and *Carthaginian*, all agree.

*Syphax*. Here, here, begins the bitterness of ruin,  
Here my chains grind me first!

*Maf.* Poor *Sophonisba*!  
She too becomes the prize of conquering *Rome*;  
What most her heart abhors. Alas, how hard  
Will slavery sit on her exalted soul!  
She never will endure it, she will die.  
For not a *Roman* burns with nobler ardor,  
A higher sense of liberty than she;  
And tho' she marry'd thee, her only stain,  
False to my youth, and faithless to her vows;  
Yet I must own it, from a worthy cause,  
From public spirit, did her fault proceed.

*Syphax*. Must I then hear her praise from thee?  
Confusion!

Oh! for a lonely dungeon! where I rather  
Would talk with my own groans, and breathe re-  
venge,  
Than in the mansions of the blest with thee.  
Hell! Whither must I go?

*Maf.*



*Maf.* Unhappy man !  
And is thy breast determin'd against peace,  
On comfort shut ?

*Syphax.* On all, but death, from thee.

*Maf.* *Narva*, be *Syphax* thy peculiar care ;  
And use him well with tenderness and honour.  
This evening *Lælius*, and to morrow *Scipio*,  
To *Cirtha* comes. Then let the *Romans* take  
Their prisoner.

*Syphax.* There shines a gleam of hope  
Across the gloom---From thee deliver'd!--Ease  
Breathes in that thought--Lead on---My heart grows  
lighter!

## S C E N E V.

*Maf.* What dreadful havock in the human breast  
The passions make, when unconfin'd, and mad,  
They burst unguided by the mental eye,  
The light of reason, which in various ways  
Points them to good, or turns them back from ill!

O save me from the tumult of the soul!  
From the wild beasts within!--For circling fands,  
When the swift whirlwind whelms them o'er the lands;  
The roaring deeps that to the clouds arise,  
While through the storm the darting lightning flies;  
The monster-brood to which this land gives birth,  
The blazing city, and the gaping earth;  
All deaths, all tortures, in one pang combin'd,  
Are gentle to the tempest of my mind.

*The End of the First Act.*

## ACT II. SCENE I.

MASINISSA, NARVA.

MASINISSA.

THOU good old man, by whom my youth  
was form'd,

The firm companion of my various life,  
I own, 'tis true, that *Sophonisba's* image  
Lives in my bosom still; and at each glance  
I take in secret of the bright idea,  
A strange disorder seizes on my soul,  
Which burns with stronger glory. Need I say,  
How once she had my vows? Till *Scipio* came,  
Resistless man! like a descending God,  
And snatch'd me from the *Carthaginian* side  
To nobler *Rome*; beneath whose laurel'd brow,  
And fav'ring eye, the nations grow polite,  
Humane and happy. Then thou may'st remember,  
Such is this woman's high impetuous spirit,  
That all-controuling love she bears her country,  
Her *Carthage*; that for this she sacrific'd  
To *Syphax*, unbelov'd, her blooming years,  
And won him off from *Rome*.

Narva.

My generous prince!

Applauding *Afric* of thy choice approves.  
Fame claps her wings, and virtue smiles on thee,  
Of peace thou softner, and thou soul of war!  
But oh beware of that fair foe to glory,  
Woman! and most of *Carthaginian* woman!  
Who has not heard of fatal *Punic* guile?  
Of their stoln conquests? their insidious leagues?  
Their *Asdrubals*? their *Hannibals*? with all  
Their wiley heroes? And, if such their men,  
What must their women be?

Mas.

*Mas.*

You make me smile.

I thank thy honest zeal. But never dread  
 The firmness of my heart, the strong attachment,  
 I hold to *Rome*, to *Scipio*, and to Glory.  
 Indeed, I cannot, would not quite forget  
 The grace of *Sophonisba*; how she look'd  
 And talk'd, and mov'd, a *Pallas*, or a *Juno*!  
 Accomplish'd even in trifles, when she stoop'd  
 From higher thoughts, and with a soften'd eye  
 Gave her quick spirit into gayer life.  
 Then every word was liveness, and wit:  
 We heard the Muses' song; and the dance swam  
 Thro' all the maze of harmony. Believe me  
 I do not flatter; yet my panting soul  
 To *Scipio*'s friendship, to the fair pursuit  
 Of fame, and for my people's happiness,  
 Resign'd this *Sophonisba*; and tho' now  
 Constrain'd by sweet necessity to see her,  
 A captive in my power, yet will I still  
 Resign her.

*Narva.*

I'll not doubt thy fortitude,

My *Masiniſſa*, thy exalted purpose  
 Not to be lost in love; but ah! we know not,  
 Oft, till experience sighs it to the soul,  
 The boundless witchcraft of ensnaring woman,  
 And our own slippery hearts. From *Scipio* learn  
 The temperance of heroes. I'll recount  
 Th' instructive story, what these eyes beheld;  
 Perhaps you've heard it; but 'tis pleasing still,  
 Tho' told a thousand times.

*Mas.*

I burn to hear it.

Lost by my late misfortunes in the desert,  
 I liv'd a stranger to the voice of fame,  
 To *Scipio*'s last exploits. Indulge me now,  
 Great Actions, ev'n recounted, raise the mind;  
 But when a friend has done them, then my *Narva*,  
 They

They doubly charm us ; then with more than wonder,  
Even with a sort of vanity we listen.

*Narva.* When to his glorious, first essay in war,  
New *Carthage* fell ; there all the flower of *Spain*  
Were kept in hostage ; a full field presenting  
For *Scipio*'s generosity to shine.

And then it was, that when the heroë heard  
How I to thee belong'd, he with large gifts,  
And friendly words dismiss'd me.

*Maf.* I remember.  
And in his favour That engag'd me first.  
But to thy story.

*Narva.* What with admiration  
Struck every heart was this----A noble virgin,  
Conspicuous far o'er all the captive dames,  
Was mark'd the general's prize. She wept, and  
blush'd,

Young, fresh, and blooming like the morn. An eye,  
As when the blue sky trembles through a cloud  
Of purest white. A secret charm combin'd  
Her features, and infus'd enchantment through them.  
Her shape was harmony----But eloquence  
Beneath her beauty fails ; which seem'd on purpose,  
By nature lavish'd on her, that mankind  
Might see the virtue of a heroë tried  
Almost beyond the stretch of human force.  
Soft as she pass'd along, with downcast eyes,  
Where gentle sorrow swell'd, and now and then  
Dropt o'er her modest cheek a trickling tear,  
The *Roman* legions languish'd ; and hard war  
Felt more than pity. Ev'n their chief himself,  
As on his high tribunal rais'd he sat,  
Turn'd from the dangerous fight, and chiding ask'd  
His officers, if by this gift they meant  
To cloud his glory in its very dawn.



*Maf.* Oh Gods ! my fluttering heart ! On, stop not, *Narva*.

*Narva.* She, question'd of her birth, in trembling accents,

With tears and blushes broken, told her tale.

But when he found her royally descended,

Of her old captive parents the sole joy ;

And that a hapless *Celtiberian* prince,

Her lover and belov'd, forgot his chains,

His lost dominions, and for her alone

Wept out his tender soul ; sudden the heart

Of this young, conquering, loving, godlike *Roman*

Felt all the great divinity of virtue.

His wishing youth stood check'd, his tempting power,

Restrain'd by kind humanity.----at once

He for her parents and her lover call'd.

The various scene imagine : how his troops

Look'd dubious on, and wonder'd what he meant ;

While stretch'd below the trembling suppliants lay,

Rack'd by a thousand mingling passions, fear,

Hope, jealousy, disdain, submission, grief,

Anxiety, and love in every shape.

To these as different sentiments succeeded,

As mixt emotions, when the man divine

Thus the dread silence to the lover broke.

“ We both are young, both charm'd. The right of  
“ war

“ Has put thy beauteous mistress in my power ;

“ With whom I could in the most sacred ties

“ Live out a happy life : but know that *Romans*

“ Their hearts as well as enemies can conquer.

“ Then take her to thy soul ; and with her take

“ Thy liberty and kingdom. In return

“ I ask but this. When you behold these eyes,

“ These charms, with transport ; be a friend to *Rome*.

*Maf.*



# SOPHONISBA.

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*Maf.* There spoke the soul of *Scipio*-- But the  
Lovers?

*Narva.* Joy and ecstatic wonder held them mute  
While the loud camp, and all the clustring crowd,  
That hung around, rang with repeated shouts.  
Fame took th' alarm, and thro' resounding *Spain*  
Blew fast the fair report; which, more than arms,  
Admiring nations to the *Romans* gain'd.

*Maf.* My friend in glory! thy awaken'd prince  
Springs at thy noble tale. It fires my soul,  
And nerves each thought anew; apt oft perhaps  
Too much, too much to slacken into love.  
But now the soft oppression flies; and all  
My mounting powers expand to deeds like these.  
Who, who would live, my *Narva*, just to breathe  
This idle air, and indolently run,  
Day after day, the still-returning round  
Of life's mean offices, and sickly joys?  
But, in the service of mankind, to be  
A guardian god below----Still to employ  
The mind's brave ardour in heroic aims,  
Such as may raise us o'er the groveling herd,  
And make us shine for ever, That is life.  
Bleed every vein about me; every nerve  
With anguish tremble; every sinew ake;  
The third time may I lose my crown; again  
Wander the false inhospitable Syrts;  
If, to reward my toils, the god will grant me  
To share the wreath of fame on *Scipio*'s brow.

But see, she comes, the beauteous *Sophonisba*!  
Behold, my friend, mark her majestic port!

B 2

SCENE

## SCENE II.

MASINISSA, SOPHONISBA, NARVA, PHOENISSA.

*Seph.* Behold, victorious prince! the scene revers'd;  
 And *Sophonisba* kneeling here; a captive,  
 O'er whom the Gods, thy fortune, and thy virtue,  
 Give thee unquestion'd power of life and death.  
 If such a one may raise her suppliant voice,  
 Once music to thy ear; if she may touch  
 Thy knee, thy purple, and thy victor-hand;  
 Oh listen, *Masinissa*! Let thy soul  
 Intensely listen! While I fervent pray,  
 And strong adjure thee, by that regal state,  
 In which with equal pomp we lately shone;  
 By the *Numidian* name, our common boast,  
 And by those household gods; who may, I wish,  
 With better omens take thee to this palace,  
 Than *Syphax* hence they sent. As is thy pleasure,  
 In all beside determine of my fate.  
 This, this alone I beg. Never, oh never!  
 Into the cruel, proud, and hated power  
 Of *Romans* let me fall. Since angry heav'n  
 Will have it so, that I must be a slave,  
 And that a galling chain must bind these hands  
 It were some little softning in my doom,  
 To call a kindred son of the same clime,  
 A native of *Numidia*, my lord.  
 But if thou canst not save me from the *Romans*,  
 If this sad favour be beyond thy power;  
 At least to give me death is what thou canst.  
 Here strike---my naked bosom courts thy sword;  
 And my last breath shall bless thee, *Masinissa*!

*Mas.* Rise, *Sophonisba*, rise. To see thee thus  
 Is a revenge I scorn; and all the man  
 Within me, though much injur'd by thy pride,

And

And spirit too tempestuous for thy sex,  
Yet blushes to behold thus at my feet,  
Thus prostrate low, her, for whom kings have kneel'd,  
The fairest, but the falsest of her sex.

*Soph.* Spare thy reproach.---'Tis cruel thus to lose  
In rankling discord, and ungen'rous strife,  
The few remaining moments that divide me  
From the most loath'd of evils, *Roman* bondage!  
Yes, shut thy heart against me; shut thy heart  
Against compassion, every human thought,  
Even recollected love: yet know, rash youth!  
That when thou seest me swell their lofty triumph,  
Thou seest thy self in me. This is my day;  
To-morrow will be thine. But here, be sure,  
Here will I lie on this vile earth, forlorn,  
Of hope abandon'd, since despis'd by thee;  
These locks all loose and sordid in the dust;  
This sullied bosom growing to the ground,  
Till the remorseless soldier comes, more fierce  
From recent blood, and in thy very eye,  
Lays raging his rude sanguinary grasp  
On these weak limbs; and tortures them with chains.  
Then if no friendly steel, no nectar'd draught  
Of deadly poison, can enlarge my soul;  
It will indignant burst from a slave's body;  
And, join'd to mighty *Dido*, scorn ye all.

*Mas.* Oh *Sophonisba*! 'tis not safe to hear thee;  
And I mistook my heart, to trust it thus.  
Hence let me fly.

*Soph.* You shall not, *Masiniissa*!  
Here will I hold you, tremble here for ever;  
Here unremitting grow, till you consent.  
And can'st thou think, oh! can'st thou think to leave  
me,

Expos'd, defenceless, wretched, here alone,  
A prey to *Romans* flush'd with blood and conquest,

The subject of their scorn or baser love?  
 Sure *Masiniſſa* cannot; and, tho chang'd,  
 Tho cold as that averted look he wears;  
 Sure love can ne'er in gen'rous breasts be lost  
 To that degree, as not from shame and outrage  
 'To save what once they lov'd.

*Maf.*

Enchantment! Madness!

What would'st thou, *Sophonisba*! --- Oh my heart!  
 My treacherous heart!

*Soph.*

What would I, *Masiniſſa*!

My mean request sits blushing on my cheek.  
 To be thy slave, young prince, is what I beg;  
 Here *Sophonisba* kneels to be thy slave;  
 Yet kneels in vain. But thou'rt a slave thyself,  
 And canst not from the *Romans* save one woman;  
 Her, who was once the triumph of thy soul;  
 Ere they seduc'd it by their lying glory.  
 Immortal gods! and am I fallen so low?  
 Scorn'd by a lover? by the man whom once  
 My heart, alas! too much inclin'd to love,  
 Before he sunk into the slave of *Rome*?  
 Nought can be worth this baseness, life, nor empire!  
 I loath me for it. --- On this kinder earth,  
 Then leave me, leave me, to despair and death!

*Maf.* I cannot bear her tears. --- Rise, quickly rise,

In all the conquering majesty of charms,  
 O *Sophonisba*, rise! while here I swear,  
 By the tremendous powers that rule mankind!  
 By heaven and earth, and hell! by love and glory!  
 The *Romans* shall not hurt you --- *Romans* cannot;  
 For *Rome* is generous as the gods themselves,  
 And honours, not insults, a generous foe.  
 Yet since you dread them, take this royal hand,  
 The pledge of surety, by which kings are bound;  
 By which I hold you mine, and vow to treat you,

With



With all the softness of remember'd love,  
All that can sooth thy fate, and make thee happy.

*Soph.* I thank thee, *Masiniſſa* ! now the same,  
The same bright youth, exalted, full of soul ;  
With whom in happier days I us'd to pass  
The tender hour ; while, dawning fair in love,  
All song and sweetness, life set joyous out ;  
Ere the black tempest of ambition rose,  
And drove us different ways.---Thus dress'd in war,  
In nodding plumes, o'ercaſt with ſullen thought,  
With purpos'd vengeance dark, I knew thee not ;  
But now breaks out the beauteous ſun anew,  
The gay *Numidian* ſhines, who warm'd me once,  
Whoſe love was glory.----Vain ideas, hence !  
----Long ſince, my heart, to nobler paſſions known,  
Has your acquaintance ſcorn'd.

*Maſ.* Oh ! while you talk,  
Enchanting fair one ! my deluded thought  
Runs back to days of love ; when fancy ſtill  
Found worlds of beauty, ever riſing new  
To the tranſported eye ; when flattering hope  
Form'd endleſs proſpects of encreaſing bliſs ;  
And ſtill the credulous heart believ'd them all,  
Even more than love could promiſe.---But the ſcene  
Is full of danger for a youthful eye ;  
I muſt not, dare not, will not look that way.  
O hide it, wiſdom, glory, from my view !  
Or in ſweet ruin I ſhall ſink again.

Diſtemper clouds thy cheek ; thy colour goes.  
Retire, and from the troubles of the day  
Repoſe thy weary ſoul, worn out with care,  
And rough unhappy thought.

*Soph.* May *Masiniſſa*  
Ne'er want the goodneſs he has ſhewn to me.



## SCENE III.

MASINISSA, NARVA.

*Mas.* The danger's o'er, I've heard the *Siren's* song,

Yet still to virtue hold my steady course.  
I mark'd thy kind concern, thy friendly fears,  
And own them just ; for she has beauty, *Narva*,  
So full, so perfect, with so great a soul  
Inform'd, so rais'd with animating spirit,  
As strikes like lightning from the hand of *Jove*,  
And raises love to glory.

*Narva.* Ah, my Prince !

Too true, it is too true ; her fatal charms  
Are powerful, and to *Masiniſſa's* heart  
Know but too well the way. And art thou sure,  
That the soft poison, which within thy veins  
Lay unextinguish'd, is not rous'd anew,  
Is not this moment working through thy soul ?  
Dost thou not love ? Confess.

*Mas.* What said my friend,

Of poison ? love ? of loving *Sophonisba* ?  
Yes, I admire her, wonder at her beauty,  
And he who does not is as dull as earth,  
The cold unanimated form of man,  
Ere lighted up with the celestial fire.  
Where'er she goes still admiration gazes,  
And listens while she talks. Even thou thy self,  
Who saw'st her with the malice of a friend,  
Ev'n thou thy self admir'st her.---Dost thou not ?  
Say, speak sincerely.

*Narva.* She has charms indeed ;

But has she charms like virtue ? Tho majestic ;  
Does she command us with a force like glory ?

*Mas.*

*Maf.* All glory in her eye! Perfection thence  
Looks from its throne; and on her ample brow  
Sits majesty. Her features glow with life,  
Warm with heroic soul. Her mien!--she walks,  
As when a towering goddess treads this earth.  
But when her language flows; when such a mind  
Descends to sooth, to sigh, to weep, to grasp  
The tottering knee; oh! *Narva, Narva, oh!*  
Expression here is dumb.

*Narva,*

Alas! my Lord.

Is this the talk of sober admiration?  
Are these the sallies of a heart at ease?  
Of *Scipio's* friend? Is this thy steady virtue?

*Maf.* I tell thee once again, too cautious man,  
That when a woman begs, a matchless woman,  
A woman once lov'd, a fallen queen,  
A *Sophonisba!* when she twines her charms  
Around our soul, and all her power of looks,  
Of tears, of sighs, of softness, plays upon us;  
He's more or less than man who can resist her.  
For me, my steadfast soul approves, nay more,  
Exults in the protection it has promis'd.  
And nought, tho plighted honour did not bind me,  
Should shake the virtuous purpose of my heart;  
Nought, by th' avenging gods! who heard my vow,  
And hear me now again.

*Narva,*

And was it then

For this you conquer'd?

*Maf.*

Yes, and triumph in it.

This was my fondest wish; the very point,  
The plume of glory, the delicious prize  
Of bleeding years. I must have been a brute,  
A greater monster than *Namidia* breeds,  
A horror to myself; if on the ground,  
Cast vilely from me, I th' illustrious fair  
Had left to bondage, bitterness, and death.

Nor is there aught in war worth what I feel ;  
 In pomp and hollow state, like the sweet sense  
 Of infelt bliss ; which the reflection gives me,  
 Of saving thus such excellence and beauty  
 From what her generous soul abhors the most.

*Narva.* My friend ! my royal lord ! alas ! you  
 slide,

And sink from virtue. On the giddy brink  
 Of fate you stand.---One step, and all is lost !

*Maf.* No more, no more ! if this is being lost,  
 And rushing down the precipice of fate ;  
 Then down I go, far far beyond the reach  
 Of scrupulous dull precaution.---Leave me, *Narva.*  
 I want to be alone, to find some shade,  
 Some solitary gloom ; there to shake off  
 These harsh tumultuous cares that vex my life,  
 This sick ambition on itself recoiling ;  
 And there to listen to the gentle voice,  
 The sigh of peace, something, I know not what,  
 That whispers transport to my heart.---Farewel.

#### S C E N E IV.

*NARVA alone.*

Struck, and he knows it not.----So when the field,  
 Elate in heart, the warrior scorns to yield ;  
 The streaming blood can scarce convince his eyes ;  
 Nor will he feel the wound by which he dies.

*The End of the Second Act.*

A C T

## A C T III. S C E N E I.

MASINISSA *alone.*

**I**N vain I wander thro the shade for Peace ;  
'Tis with the calm alone, the pure of heart,  
That there the goddess talks---But in my breast  
Some busy thought, some secret eating pang,  
Still restless throbs, on *Sophonisba* still  
Earnest, intent, devoted all to her.  
What may this mean ?---'Tis love, almighty love !  
Returning on me with a stronger tide.  
Come to my breast, thou rosy-smiling god !  
Come unconfin'd ! bring all thy joys along,  
All thy soft cares, and mix them copious here.  
Quick, let me fly to her ; and there forget  
This tedious absence, war, ambition, noise,  
Friendship itself, the vanity of fame,  
And all but love, for love is more than all !

## S C E N E II.

MASINISSA, (NARVA.

*Mas.* Welcome again, my friend,---Come, nearer,  
*Narva ;*

Lend me thine arm, and I will tell thee all,  
Unfold my secret heart, whose every pulse  
With *Sophonisba* beats.---Nay hear me out---  
Swift, as I mus'd, the conflagration spread ;  
At once too strong, too general, to be quench'd.  
I love, and I approve it, deat upon her,

Even

Even think these minutes lost I talk with thee.  
 Heavens ! what emotions have possess'd my soul !  
 Snatch'd by a moment into years of passion.

*Narva.* Ah *Masiniissa* !---

*Mas.*

Argue not against me.

Talk down the circling winds that lift the desert ;  
 And when by lightning fir'd the forests blaze,  
 Talk down the flame, but not my stronger love.  
 I have for love a thousand thousand reasons,  
 Dear to the heart, and potent o'er the soul.  
 My every thought, reflexion, mem'ry all  
 Are a perpetual spring of tenderness ;  
 Oh *Sophonisba* ! I am wholly thine.

*Narva.* Is this deceitful day then come to nought,  
 This day, that set thee on a double throne ?  
 That gave thee *Syphax* chain'd, thy deadly foe ?  
 With perfect conquest crown'd thee, perfect glory ?  
 Is it so soon eclips'd ? and does yon sun,  
 Yon setting sun, who this fair morning saw thee  
 Ride through the ranks of long extended war,  
 As radiant as himself ; and when the storm  
 Began, beheld thee tread the rising surge  
 Of battle high, and drive it on the foe ;  
 Does he now, blushing, see thee sunk so weak ?  
 Caught in a smile ? the captive of a look ?  
 I cannot name it without tears.

*Mas.*

Away !

I'm sick of war, of the destroying trade,  
 Smooth'd o'er, and gilded with the name of glory.  
 In vain you spread the martial field to me,  
 My happier eyes are turn'd another way,  
 Behold it not ; or, if they do, behold it  
 Shrunk up, far off, a visionary scene ;  
 As to the waking man appears the dream.

*Narva.* Or rather as realities appear,

The



The virtue, pomp, and dignities of life,  
In sick disorder'd dreams.

*Maf.* Think not I scorn  
The task of heroes, when oppression rages,  
And lawless violence confounds the world.  
Who would not bleed with transport for his country,  
Tear every tender passion from his heart,  
And greatly die to make a people happy ;  
Ought not to taste of happiness himself,  
And is low-soul'd indeed---But sure, my friend,  
There is a time for love ; or life were vile,  
A tedious circle of unjoyous days  
With senseless hurry fill'd, distasteful, wretched,  
Till love comes smiling in, and brings its sweets  
Its healing sweets, soft cares, transporting joys,  
That make the poor account of life compleat,  
And justify the Gods.

*Narva.* Mistaken Prince,  
I blame not love. But----

*Maf.* Slander not my passion.  
I've suffer'd thee too far.---Take heed, old man.---  
Love will not bear an accusation, *Narva*.

*Narva.* I'll speak the truth, when truth and friendship call,  
Nor fear thy frown unkind.----Thou hast no right  
To *Sophonisba* ; she belongs to *Rome*.

*Maf.* Ha ! she belongs to *Rome*.---'Tis true--- My thoughts,  
Where have you wander'd, not to think of this ?  
Think e'er I promis'd ? e'er I lov'd ?---Confusion !  
I know not what to say---I should have lov'd,  
Tho *Jove* in muttering thunder had forbid it.  
But *Rome* will not refuse so small a boon,  
Whose gifts are kingdoms ; *Rome* must grant it sure,  
One captive to my wish, one poor request,

So

So small to them, but oh so dear to me !  
In this my heart confides.

*Narva.*

Delusive love !

Thro what wild projects is the frantick mind  
Beguil'd by thee ?--And think'st thou that the *Romans*,  
The senators of *Rome*, these gods on earth,  
Wife, steady to the right, severely just,  
All uncorrupt, and like eternal fate  
Not to be mov'd, will listen to the sigh  
Of idle love ? They who when virtue calls,  
Will not the voice itself of nature hear,  
But bid their children bleed before their eyes ;  
Will they regard the light fantastick pangs  
Of a fond heart ? and with thy kingdom give thee  
Their most inveterate foe, from their firm side,  
Like *Syphax* to delude thee ? and the point  
Of their own bounty on themselves to turn ?  
Thou canst not hope it sure.---Impossible !

*Maf.* What shall I do ? be now the friend exerted,  
For love and honour press me ; love and honour,  
All that is dear and excellent in life,  
All that or sooths the man or lifts the heroë,  
Engage my soul.

*Narva.*

Rash was your vow, my lord.

I know not what to counsel.---When you vow'd,  
You vow'd what was not in your power to grant ;  
And therefore 'tis not binding.

*Maf.*

Never ! Never !

Oh never will I falsify that vow !  
Ere then destruction seize me ! Yes, ye *Romans*,  
If it be so, there, take your kingdoms back,  
Your friendship, your esteem, all, all but her.

Hold,---Let me think a while---It shall be so !  
By all th' inspiring gods that prompt my thought,  
This very night shall solemnize our vows ;

And

# SOPHONISBA.

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And the next joyous fun, that visits *Afric*,  
See *Sophonisba* seated on my throne.---

Then must they spare my queen. --- They will not,  
surely,

They will not dare to force my consort from me.

*Narva*. And is it possible, ye gods that rule us!  
Can *Masiniſſa* in his pride of youth,  
In his meridian glory shining wide,  
The light of *Afric*, can the friend of *Scipio*  
Take a false woman to his nuptial bed,  
Who scorn'd him for a tyrant old and cruel,  
His rancorous foe? and gave her untouch'd bloom,  
Her spring of charms to *Syphax*?

*Maf.*

Curst remembrance!

This, this has thrown a serpent to my heart;  
While it o'erflow'd with tenderneſs, with joy,  
With all the ſweetneſs of exulting love.  
Now nought but gall is there, and burning poiſon.  
Yes, it was ſo!---Curſe on her vain ambition!  
What had her meddling ſex to do with ſtates?  
Forſook for him, juſt gods! for hateful *Syphax*,  
My tender, faithful love for his groſs paſſion!  
The thought is hell!--Oh I had treaſur'd up  
A world of indignation, years of ſcorn;  
But her ſad ſuppliant witchcraft ſooth'd it down.  
Where is ſhe now, that it may burſt upon her?  
Haſte, bring her to me; tho my plighted faith  
Shall ſave her from the *Romans*, yet I'll tell her,  
That I will never, never ſee her more!  
Ha! there ſhe comes.----Pernicious fair one!----  
Leave me.

SCENE

## SCENE III.

SOPHONISBA, MASINISSA.

*Soph.* Forgive this quick return. --- The rage, confusion,

And mingled passions of this luckless day,  
Made me forget another warm request  
I had to beg of generous *Masinissa*;  
For oh to whom, save to the generous, can  
The miserable fly? --- But much disturb'd  
You look, and scowl upon me a denial.  
Repentance frowns on your contracted brow.  
Already, weary of my sinking fate,  
You seem to droop; and for unhappy *Syphax*  
I shall implore in vain.

*Mas.* For *Syphax*? vengeance!  
And canst thou mention him? oh grant me breath!

*Soph.* I know, young prince, how deep he has  
provok'd thee;

How keen he sought thy youth; thro' what a fire  
Of great distress, from which you come the brighter.

On meer indiff'rent objects, common bounty  
Will shower relief; but when our bitterest foe  
Lies sunk, disarm'd, and desolate, then! then!  
To feel the mercies of a pitying God,  
To raise him from the dust, and that best way  
To triumph o'er him, is heroic goodness.  
Oh let unhappy *Syphax* touch thy heart,  
Victorious *Masinissa*!

*Mas.* Monstrous this!  
Still dost thou blast me with that cursed name!  
The very name thy conscious guilt should shun,  
Had he but driven me from my native throne,

From



From regal pomp and luxury, to dwell  
 Among the forest beasts ; to bear the beam  
 Of red *Numidian* suns, and the dank dew  
 Of cold unshelter'd nights ; to mix with wolves,  
 To hunt with hungry tigers for my prey,  
 And thirst with *Dipsads* on the burning sand ;  
 I could have thank'd him for his angry lesson ;  
 The fair occasion that his rage afforded  
 Of learning patience, fortitude, and hope,  
 Still rising stronger on incumbent fate.  
 But there is one unpardonable outrage,  
 That scorches up the tear in pity's eye,  
 And ev'n sweet mercy's self converts to gall.  
 I cannot---will not name it---Down my heart,  
 My swelling heart !

*Soph.* Ah ! whence this sudden storm,  
 That hurries all thy soul ?

*Mas.* And dost thou ask ?  
 Ask thy own faithless heart, snatch'd from my vows,  
 From the warm wishes of my springing youth,  
 And giv'n to that old hated monster, *Syphax*.  
 Perfidious *Sophonisba* !

*Soph.* Nay no more.  
 With too much truth I can return thy charge.  
 Why didst thou drive me to that cruel choice ?  
 Why leave me, with my country, to destruction ?  
 Why break thy love, thy faith, and join the *Romans* ?

*Mas.* By heavens ! the *Romans* were my better  
 genius,  
 Sav'd me from shame, and form'd my youth to glory ;  
 But for the *Romans* I had been a savage,  
 A wretch like *Syphax*, a forgotten thing,  
 The tool of *Carthage*.

*Soph.* Meddle not with *Carthage*,  
 Impatient youth ; for that I will not bear ;

Tho



Tho I am here thy slave, I will not bear it.  
Not one base word of *Carthage* --- on thy soul !

*Maf.* How vain thy phrenzy ! Go, command thy  
slaves,

Thy fools, thy *Syphaxes* ; but I will speak,  
Speak loud of *Carthage*, call it false, ungenerous ;  
The *Romans* are the light, the glory ---

*Soph.* *Romans !*

Perdition on the *Romans* ! ---on their friends,  
On all but thee. ---The *Romans* are the scourge  
Of the next world, destroyers of mankind,  
And all beneath the smooth dissembling mask  
Of justice, and compassion ; as if slave  
Was but another name for civiliz'd.  
Against her tyrant power, each generous sword  
Of every nation should be drawn --- While *Carthage*  
Unblemish'd rises on the base of commerce,  
Founds her fair empire on that common good,  
And asks of heaven nought but the winds and tides  
To carry plenty, letters, science, wealth,  
Civility, and grandeur, round the world.

*Maf.* No more compare them ! for the gods them-  
selves

Declare for *Rome*.

*Soph.* It was not always so.

The gods declar'd for *Hannibal* ; when *Italy*  
Blaz'd all around him, all her streams ran blood ;  
And when at *Trebia*, *Thrasymene*, and *Cannæ*,  
The *Carthaginian* sword with *Roman* blood  
Was drunk----Oh, that he then, on that dread day  
While lifeless consternation blacken'd *Rome*,  
Had raz'd th' accursed city to the ground,  
And sav'd the world !----When will it come again,  
A day so glorious, and so big with vengeance  
On those my soul abhors ?

*Maf.*

*Maf.* Avert it heaven !  
The *Romans* not enslave, but save the world  
From *Carthaginian* rage ---

*Soph.* I'll bear no more !  
Nor tendernefs, nor life, nor liberty,  
Nothing fhall make me bear it.----Rather, rather,  
Detested as ye are, ye *Romans*, take me----  
Oh, pitying take me to your nobler chains,  
And fave me from this abject youth, your flave !  
----How canft thou kill me thus ?----

*Maf.* I meant it not.  
I only meant to tell thee, haughty fair one !  
How this alone might bind me to the *Romans* ;  
That, in a frail and fliding hour, they snatch'd me  
From the perdition of thy love, which fell,  
Like baleful lightning, where I moft could wifh,  
And prov'd deftruction to my mortal foe.  
Oh pleasing ! fortunate !

*Soph.* I thank them too.  
By heavens ! for once, I love them ; fince they turn'd  
My better thoughts from thee. Thou-- But I will not  
Give thee the name thy mean fervility  
From my juft fcorn deserves.

*Maf.* Oh freely call me  
By every name thy fury can infpire ;  
Delight me with thy hate.-- I love no more --  
It will not hurt me, *Sophonifba*.-- Love,  
Long fince I gave it to the paffing winds,  
And would not be a lover for the world ;  
A lover is the very fool of nature,  
Mad fick by his own wantonnefs of thought,  
His fever'd fancy : while, to your own charms  
Imputing all , you fwell with boundlefs pride.  
Shame on the wretch ! he fhould be driven frm men,  
To live with *Asian* flaves, in one foft herd,  
All worthlefs, all ridiculous together.

For

For me ; this moment, here I mean to bid  
Farewel, a glad farewel to love and thee.

*Soph.* With all my soul, farewel !---Yet ere you go,  
With all my soul, farewel ! ---- Yet ere you go ;  
Know that my spirit burns as high as thine,  
As high to glory, and as low to love.

Thy promises are void ; and I absolve thee,  
Here in the presence of the listening gods.----  
Take thy repented vows----To proud *Cornelia*  
I'd rather be a slave, to *Scipio's* mother,  
Than queen of all *Numidia*, by the favour  
Of him, who dares insult the helpless thus.

(*Pausing.*)

Still dost thou stay ? behold me then again,  
Hopeless, and wild, a lost abandon'd slave.  
And now thy brutal purpose must be gain'd.  
Away, thou cruel, and ungenerous, go !

*Mas.* No, not for worlds would I resume my vow !  
Dishonour blast me then ! all kind of ills  
Fill up my cup of bitterness, and shame !  
When I resign thee to triumphant *Rome*.

Oh lean not thus dejected to the ground !  
The sight is misery.----what roots me here ?

(*Aside.*)

Alas ! I have urg'd my foolish heart too far ;  
And love depress'd recoils with greater force.  
Oh *Sophonisba* !

*Soph.* By thy pride she dies.  
Inhuman Prince !

*Mas.* Thine is the triumph, Love !  
By heaven and earth ! I cannot hold it more.  
Wretch that I was, to crush th' unhappy thus !  
The fairest too, the dearest of her sex !  
For whom my soul could die !--- Turn, quickly turn,  
O *Sophonisba* ! my belov'd ! my glory !

Turn

Turn and forgive the violence of love,  
Of love that knows no bounds !

*Soph.* And can it be ?

Can that soft passion prove so fierce of heart,  
As on the tears of misery, the sighs  
Of death, to feast ? to torture what it loves ?

*Mas.* Yes it can be, thou goddess of my soul !  
Whose each emotion is but varied love,  
All over love, its powers, its passions, all :  
Its anger, indignation, fury, love.  
Its pride, disdain, even detestation, love ;  
And when it, wild, resolves to love no more,  
Then is the triumph of excessive love.

Didst thou not mark me ? mark the dubious rage,  
That tore my heart with anguish while I talk'd ?  
Thou didst ; and must forgive so kind a fault.  
What would thy trembling lips ?

*Soph.* Oh let me die.

For such another storm, so much contempt  
Thrown out on *Carthage*, so much praise on *Rome*,  
Were worse than death. Why should I longer tire  
My weary fate ? The most relentless *Roman*  
What could he more ?

*Mas.* Oh *Sophonisba*, hear !

See me thy suppliant now. Talk not of death.  
I have no life but thee.----Alas ! Alas !  
Hadst thou a little tenderness for me,  
The smallest part of what I feel, thou wouldst----  
What wouldst thou not forgive ? But how indeed,  
How can I hope it ? Yet I from this moment  
Will so devote my being to thy pleasure,  
So live alone to gain thee ; that thou must,  
If there is human nature in thy breast,  
Feel some relenting warmth,

*Soph.* Well, well, 'tis past.

To be inexorable suits not slaves.

*M. f.*



*Maf.* Spare, spare that word ; it stabs me to the  
soul ;

My crown, my life, and liberty are thine.

Oh give my passion way ! My heart is full,  
Opprest by love ; and I could number tears,  
With all the dews that sprinkle o'er the morn ;  
Oh ! thou hast melted down my stubborn soul  
To female tenderness ---- Enough, enough,  
Have we been cheated by the trick of state,  
For *Rome* and *Carthage* suffer'd much too long ;  
And led, by gaudy fancies, wander'd far,  
Far from our bliss. But now since met again,  
Since here I hold thee, circle all perfection,  
In these blest arms , since fate too presses hard,  
Since *Rome* and slavery drive thee to the brink ;  
Let this immediate night exchange our vows,  
Secure my bliss, our future fortunes blend,  
Set thee, the queen of beauty, on my throne,  
And on these lovely brows for empire form'd  
Place *Afric's* noblest crown.----A wretched gift  
To what my love would give !

*Soph.*

What ? marry thee ?

This night ?

*Maf.* Thou dear one ! yes, this very night  
Let injur'd *Hymen* have his rights restor'd,  
And bind our broken vows.---Think, serious, think  
On what I plead.---A thousand reasons urge.---  
Captivity dissolves thy former marriage ;  
And if the meanest vulgar thus are freed,  
Can *Sophonisba* to a slave, to *Syrbar*,  
The most exalted of her sex, be bound ?  
Besides it is the best, perhaps sole way,  
To save thee from the *Romans* ; and must sure  
Bar their pretensions : or if ruin comes,  
To perish with thee is to perish happy.

*Soph.* Yet must I still insist. ----

*Maf.*



Mas.

It shall be so.

I know thy purpose ; it would plead for *Syphax*.  
 He shall have all, thou dearest ! shall have all,  
 Crowns, trifles, kingdoms, all again, but thee,  
 But thee, thou more than all !

Soph.

Bear witness heaven ; (*Aside*)This is alone for *Carthage*.(*To him*)

Gain'd by goodness

I may be thine. Expect no love, no fighting.  
 Perhaps, hereafter, I may learn again  
 To hold thee dear. If on these terms thou can'st,  
 Here take me, take me, to thy wishes.

Mas.

Yes,

Yes, *Sophonisba* ! as a wretch takes life  
 From off the rack.----All wild with frantic joy,  
 Thus hold thee, press thee, to my bounding heart ;  
 And bless the bounteous Gods.----Can heaven give  
 more ?

Oh happy ! happy ! happy !---Come, my fair,  
 This ready minute sees thy will perform'd,  
 From *Syphax* knocks his chains ; and I myself,  
 Even in his favour, will request the *Romans*.

Oh, thou hast smil'd my passions into peace !  
 So, while conflicting winds embroil'd the seas,  
 In perfect bloom, warm with immortal blood,  
 Young *Venus* rear'd her o'er the raging flood ;  
 She smil'd around, like thine her beauties glow'd ;  
 When smooth, in gentle swells, the surges flow'd  
 Sunk, by degrees, into a liquid plain ;  
 And one bright calm sat trembling on the main.

*The End of the Third Act.*

## ACT IV. SCENE I.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA.

PHOENISSA.

**H**AIL queen of *Massyia* once again  
 And fair *Massyia* join'd ! This rising day  
 Saw *Sophonisba*, from the height of life,  
 Thrown to the very brink of slavery ;  
 State, honours, armies vanish'd ; nothing left  
 But her own great unconquerable mind.  
 And yet, ere evening comes, to larger power  
 Restor'd I see my royal friend, and kneel  
 In grateful homage to the Gods, and her.

Ye Powers, what awful changes often mark  
 The fortunes of the great !

*Soph.**Phœnissa*, true ;

'Tis awful all, the wonderous work of fate.  
 But, ah, this sudden marriage damps my soul !  
 I like it not, that wild precipitance  
 Of youth, that ardor, that impetuous stream  
 In which his love return'd. At first, my friend,  
 He vainly rag'd with disappointed love ;  
 And, as the hasty storm subsided, then  
 To softness varied, to returning fondness,  
 To sighs, to tears, to supplicating vows ;  
 But all his vows were idle, till at last  
 He shook my heart by *Rome*----To be his queen  
 Could only save me from their horrid power.  
 And there is madness in that thought, enough  
 In that strong thought alone to make me run  
 From nature.

*Phœ.*

Was it not auspicious, madam ?

Just

Just as we hop'd ? just as our wishes plan'd ?  
 Nor let your spirit sink. Your serious hours,  
 When you behold the *Roman* ravage check'd,  
 From their enchantment *Masiniſa* freed,  
 And *Carthage* mistress of the world again,  
 This marriage will approve : then will it rise  
 In all its glory, virtuous, wise and great,  
 While happy nations, then deliver'd, join  
 Their loud acclaim. And, had the blest occasion  
 Neglected flown, where now had been your hopes ?  
 Your liberty ? your country ? where your all ?  
 Think well of this ; you cannot but exult  
 In what is done.

*Soph.* So may my hopes succeed,  
 As love alone to *Carthage*, to the public,  
 Led me a marriage-victim to the temple,  
 And justifies my vows !---Ha ! *Syphax* here !  
 What would his rage with me ?---*Phœnissa*, stay.  
 But this one trial more---Heroic truth,  
 Support me now !

## S C E N E II.

SYPHAX, SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA.

*Syphax.* You seem to fly me, madam,  
 To shun my gratulations.---Here I come,  
 To join the general joy ; and I, sure I,  
 Who have to dotage, have to ruin lov'd you,  
 Must take a tender part in your success,  
 In your recover'd state.

*Soph.* 'Tis very well.  
 I thank you, sir.

*Syphax.* And gentle *Masiniſa*,  
 Say, will he prove a very coming fool ?

All pliant, all devoted to your will ?  
 A duteous wretch like *Syphax* ? --- Ha ! not mov'd !  
 Speak thou perfidious ! canst thou bear it thus ?  
 With such a steady countenance ? canst thou  
 Here see the man thou hast so grossly wrong'd,  
 And yet not sink in shame ? And yet not shake  
 In every guilty nerve ?

*Soph.* What have I done,  
 That I should tremble ? that I should not dare  
 To bear thy presence ? Was my heart to blame,  
 I'd tremble at myself, and not at thee,  
 Proud man ! Nor would I live to be ashamed.  
 For of all evils, to the generous, shame  
 Is the most deadly pang. --- But you behold  
 My late engagement with a jealous, false,  
 And selfish eye.

*Syphax.* Averging *Juno*, hear !  
 And canst thou think to justify thy self ?  
 I blush to hear thee, traitress !

*Soph.* O my soul !  
 Canst thou hear this, this base opprobrious language,  
 And yet be tamely calm ? --- Well, for this once  
 It shall be so --- in pity to thy madness ---  
 Impatient spirit down ! --- Yes, *Syphax*, yes,  
 Yes I will greatly justify myself ;  
 Even by the comfort of the thundring *Jove*,  
 Who binds the holy marriage-vow, be judg'd.  
 And every generous heart, not meanly lost  
 In little low pursuits, will sure absolve me.  
 But in the tempest of the soul, when rage,  
 Loud indignation, unattentive pride,  
 And jealousy confound it, how can then  
 The nobler, *public* sentiments be heard !  
 Yet let me tell thee ----

*Syphax.* Thou canst tell me nought.  
 Away !

Away ! away ! nought but illusion, falsehood ----

*Scph.* My heart will burst, in justice to myself  
If here I speak not ; tho' thy rage, I know,  
Can never be convinc'd, yet shall it be  
Confounded.---What ! must I renounce my freedom ?  
Forgo the power of doing general good ?  
Yield myself up the slave, the barbarous triumph  
Of insolent, enrag'd, inveterate *Rome* ?  
And all for nothing but to grace thy fall ?  
Nay, singly perish to retain the name,  
The empty title of a captive's wife ?

For thee ; the *Romans* may be mild to thee ;  
But I, a *Carthaginian*, I, whose blood  
Holds unrelenting enmity to theirs ;  
Who have myself much hurt them, and who live  
Only to work them woe ; what, what can I  
Hope from their vengeance, but the very dregs  
Of the worst fate, the bitterness of bondage ?  
Yet thou, kind man, thou in thy generous love,  
Wouldst have me suffer that ; be bound to thee,  
For that dire end alone, beyond the stretch  
Of nature, and of law.

*Syphax.*

Confusion ! Law !

I know the laws permit thee, the gross laws  
That rule the vulgar. I'm a captive, true ;  
And therefore mayst thou plead a shameful right  
To leave me to my chains---But say, thou base one !  
Ungrateful ! say, for whom am I a captive ?  
For whom has battle after battle bled ?  
For whom my crown, my kingdom, and my all,  
Been vilely cast away ? for one, ye gods !  
Who leaves me for the victor, for the foe  
I hold in utter endless detestation.

Fire ! fury ! hell !---Oh I am richly paid !  
But this it is to love a Woman ---Woman !  
The source of all disaster, all perdition !



Man in himself is social, would be happy,  
 Too happy ; but the gods to keep him wretched,  
 Curs'd him with woman ! fond, enchanting, smooth,  
 And harmless-seeming woman ; but at heart  
 All poison, serpents, tigers, furies, all  
 That is destructive, in one breast combin'd,  
 And gilded o'er with beauty !

*Sepb.*

Hapless man !

I pity thee ; this madness only stirs  
 My bosom to compassion, not to rage.  
 Think as you list of our unhappy sex,  
 Too much subjected to your tyrant force ;  
 Yet know that all, we were not all at least,  
 Form'd for your trifles, for your wanton hours.  
 Our passions so can sometimes soar above  
 The household task assign'd us, can extend  
 Beyond the narrow sphere of families,  
 And take great states into th' expanded heart,  
 As well as yours, ye partial to yourselves !  
 And this is my support, my joy, my glory ;  
 On these great principles, and these alone,  
 I still direct my conduct.

*Syphax.*

False as hell !

I loath your sex ! when i pretends to virtue.  
 You talk of honour, conscience, patriotism !  
 A female patriot !---Vanity !---Absurd !  
 Even doo ing dull credulity would laugh  
 To hear you prate. Did ever woman yet  
 Form any better purpose in her thought,  
 Than how to please her pride or wanton will ?  
 Those are the principles on which you act,  
 Yes, those alone.

*Sepb.*

Must I then, must I, *Syphax*,

Give thee a bitter proof of what I say ?  
 I would not seem to heighten thy distress,  
 Not in the least insult thee. Thou art fallen,

So fate severe has will'd it, fallen by me ;  
 I therefore have been patient : from another  
 Such language, such indignity, had fir'd  
 My soul to madness. But since driven so far,  
 I must remind thy blind injurious rage  
 Of our unhappy marriage.---

*Syphax.* Dar'st thou name it,  
 After such perfidy ?

*Soph.* Allow me, *Syphax*,  
 Hear me but once ! If what I here declare  
 Shines not with reason, and the clearest truth ;  
 May I be base, despis'd, and dumb for ever !

I pray thee think, when unpropitious *Hymen*  
 Our hands united, how I stood engag'd.  
 Was I not blooming in the pride of youth,  
 And you full hopes ; sunk in a passion too,  
 Which few resign ? Yet then I married thee,  
 Because to *Carthage* deem'd a stronger friend ;  
 For that alone. On these conditions, say,  
 Didst thou not take me, court me to thy throne ?  
 Have I deceiv'd thee since ? Have I dissembled ?  
 To gain one purpose, e'er pretended what  
 I never felt ? Thou canst not say I have.  
 And if that principle, which then inspir'd  
 My marrying thee, was right, it cannot now  
 Be wrong ; Nay, since my native city wants  
 Assistance more, and sinking calls for aid,  
 'Tis still more right----

*Syphax.* This reasoning is insult !

*Soph.* I'm sorry that thou dost oblige me to it.  
 Then in a word take my full-open'd soul.  
 All love, but that of *Carthage*, I despise.  
 I formerly to *Masiniissa* thee  
 Preferr'd not, nor to thee now *Masiniissa*,  
 But *Carthage* to you both. And if preferring  
 Thousands to one, a whole collected people,

All nature's tendernefs, whate'er is facred,  
 The liberty, the welfare of a ftate,  
 To one man's frantic happinefs, be fhame ;  
 Here, *Syphax*, I invoke it on my head !

This fet aside ; I carelefs of my felf,  
 And, fcorning prosperous ftate, had ftill been thine,  
 In all the depth of mifery proudly thine !  
 But fince the publick good, the law fupreme,  
 Forbids i ; I will leave thee with a kingdom,  
 The fame I found thee, or not reign myfelf.

Alas ! I fee thee hurt---Why cam'ft thou here,  
 Thus to inflame thee more ?

*Syphax.* Why forcerefts ? why ?  
 Thou complication of all deadly mischief !  
 Thou lying, foothing, fpecious, charming fury !  
 I'll tell thee why---To breathe my great revenge ;  
 To throw this load of burning madnefs from me ;  
 To ftab thee !-----

*Soph.* Ha !---

*Syphax.* ---And, fpringing from thy  
 heart

To quench me with thy blood !

(*Phœniffa interposes.*)

*Soph.* Off, give me way !

*Phœniffa* ; tempt not thou his brutal rage.  
 Me, me, he dares not murder ; if he dares,  
 Here let his fury ftroke ; for I dare die.  
 What holds thy trembling hand ?

*Phœn.* Guards !

*Soph.* Seize the king.

But look you treat him well, with all the ftate  
 His dignity demands.

*Syphax.* That care from thee  
 Is worfe than death,---The *Roman* trumpets !---Ha !  
 Now I bethink me, *Rome* will do me juftice.  
 Yes, I fhall fee thee walk the flave of *Rome*,

Forget

Forget my wrongs, and glut me with the fight.  
Be that my best revenge.

*Soph.* Inhuman ! that,  
If there is death in *Afric*, shall not be.

## S C E N E III.

LÆLIUS, SYPHAX.

*Lælius.* *Syphax* ! alas, how fallen ! how chang'd !  
from what

I here beheld thee once in pomp, and splendor,  
At that illustrious interview, when *Rome*  
And *Carthage* met beneath this very roof,  
Their two great generals, *Asdrubal* and *Scipio*,  
To court thy friendship. Of the same repast  
Both gracefully partook, and both reclia'd  
On the same couch : for personal distaste  
And hatred seldom burn between the brave,  
Then the superiour virtues of the *Roman*  
Gain'd all thy heart. Even *Asdrubal* himself,  
With admiration struck and just despair,  
Own'd him as powerful at the social feast  
As in the battle. This thou may'st remember,  
And how thy faith was given before the Gods,  
And sworn and seal'd to *Scipio* ; yet how false  
Thou since has prov'd, I need not now recount :  
But let thy sufferings for thy guilt atone,  
The captive for the king. A *Roman* tongue  
Scorns to pursue the triumph of the sword,  
With mean upbraidings.

*Syphax.* *Lælius*, 'tis too true.  
Curse on the cause !

*Lælius.* But where is *Masiniſſa* ?  
The brave young victor, the *Numidian Roman* !  
Where is he ? that my joy, my glad applause,

From envy pure, may hail his happy state.  
Why that contemptuous smile?

*Syphax.*

Too credulous *Roman*!

I smile to think how this brave *Masiniſſa*,  
This *Rome*-devoted heroe, muſt ſtill more  
Attract thy praiſes, by a late exploit,  
In every thing ſucceſſful.

*Lælius.*

What is this?

Theſe publick ſhouts? A ſtrange unuſual joy  
O'er all the captive city blazes wide.  
What warren riot reigns to night in *Cirta*?  
Within theſe conquer'd walls?

*Syphax.*

This, *Lælius*, is

A night of triumph o'er my conqueror,  
O'er *Masiniſſa*.

*Lælius.*

*Masiniſſa*! How?

*Syphax.* Why he to night is married to my queen.

*Lælius.* Impoſſible!--

*Syphax.*

Yes, ſhe, the fury! ſhe,

Who put the nuptial torch into my hand,  
That ſet my throne, my palace, and my kingdom,  
All in a blaze; ſhe now has ſeiz'd on him,  
Will turn him ſoon from *Rome*---I know her power,  
Her lips diſtil unconquerable poiſon.  
O glorious thought!--her arms, her fatal love  
Will crush him deep, beneath the mighty ruins  
Of falling *Carthage*.

*Lælius.* Can it be? Amazement!

*Syphax.* Nay learn it from himſelf.---He comes---  
Away!

Ye furies ſnatch me from his ſight! For hell,  
Its tortures all are gentle to the preſence  
Of a triumphant rival?

*Lælius.*

What is man?

SCENE



## SCENE IV.

MASSINISSA, LÆLIUS.

*Maf.* Thou more than partner of this glorious day  
Which has from *Carthage* torn her chief support,  
And tottering left her, I rejoice to see thee---  
To *Cirthe* welcome, *Lælius*.---Thy brave legions  
Now taste the sweet repose by valour purchas'd ;  
This city pours refreshment on their toils.  
I order'd *Narva*----

*Lælius.* Thanks to *Masiniſſa*.  
All that is well.---But I observ'd the king  
More loosely guarded than befits the state  
Of such a captive. True, indeed, from him  
There is not much to fear. The dangerous spirit  
Is his imperious queen, his *Sophonisba*.  
The pride, the rage of *Carthage* live in her.  
How ? where is she ?

*Maf.* She, *Lælius* ? in my care.  
Think not of her. I'll answer for her conduct.

*Lælius.* Yes, if in chains. Till then, believe me,  
prince,  
It were as safe to answer for the winds,  
That their loos'd fury will not rouse the waves,  
Or that the darted lightning will be harmless ;  
As promise peace from her.---But why so dark ?  
You shift your place, your countenance grows warm.  
It is not usual this in *Masiniſſa*.  
Pray what offence can asking for the queen,  
The *Roman* captive, give ?

*Maf.* *Lælius*, no more.  
You know my marriage.---*Syphax* has been busy---  
It is unkind to dally with my passion.

*Lælus.* Ah, *Masiniſſa*! was it then for this,  
Thy hurry hi her from the recent battle?  
Is the first inſtance of the *Roman* bounty  
Thus, thus abus'd? They give thee back thy king-  
dom;

And in return are of their captive robb'd;  
Of all they valued, *Sophoniſſa*.---

*Maſ.* Robb'd!  
How, *Lælius*? Robb'd!

*Lælius.* Yes, *Masiniſſa*, robb'd.  
What is it elſe? But I, this very night,  
Will here aſſert the majeſty of *Rome*,  
And, mark me, tear her from the nuptial bed.

*Maſ.* Oh Gods! oh patience! As ſoon fiery *Roman*!  
As ſoon thy rage might from her azure ſphere  
Tear yonder moon---The man who ſeizes her,  
Shall ſet his foot firſt on my bleeding heart.  
Of that be ſure.---And is it thus you treat  
Your firm allies? ---Thus kings in friendſhip with  
you?

Of human paſſions ſtrip them?---Slaves indeed!  
If thus deny'd the common privilege  
Of nature, what the weakeſt creatures claim,  
A right to what they love.

*Lælius.* Out! out!--For ſhame!  
This paſſion makes thee blind. Here is a war,  
Which deſolates the nations, has almoſt  
Laid waſte the world. How many widows, orphans,  
And tender virgins weep its rage in *Rome*!  
Even her great ſenate droops; her nobles fail;  
Nature herſelf, by frequent prodigies,  
Seems at this havock of her works to ſicken:  
And our *Auſonian* plains are now become  
A horror to the ſight: At each ſad ſtep,  
Remembrance weeps. Yet her, the greateſt prize  
It hitherto has yielded; her, whoſe charms

Are

Are only turn'd to whet its cruel point;  
 Thou to thy wedded breast has wildly taken,  
 Has purchas'd thee her beauties by the blood  
 Of thy protecting friends; and on a throne  
 Set her, this day recover'd by their arms.  
 Canst thou do this, and call thy self a king  
 Ally'd to *Rome*? Rash youth, the *Roman* people,  
 To kings, who dare offend them thus, vouchsafe not  
 The honour of their friendship.---Thou hast thrown  
 That glory from thee, and must now be taught  
 To dread their wrath.

*Maf.* Be not so haughty, *Lælius*.  
 It scarce becomes the gentle *Scipio*'s friend;  
 Suits not thy character, the tender manners  
 I still have mark'd in thee. I honour *Rome*;  
 But honour too myself, my vows, my queen:  
 Nor will, nor can I tamely hear thee threaten  
 To seize her like a slave.

*Lælius.* I will be calm.  
 This thy rash deed, this unexpected shock,  
 Such a peculiar injury to me,  
 Thy friend and fellow-soldier, has perhaps  
 Snatch'd me too far. For hast thou not dishonour'd,  
 By this last action, a successful war,  
 Our common charge, trusted to us by *Scipio*?

*Maf.* Our charge from *Scipio* was to conquer *Syphax*,  
 Not by a barbarous triumph to insult  
 His beauteous queen. Was *Sophonisba* made,  
 To follow weeping a proud victor's chariot?  
 She, the first mistress of my heart, who still  
 Reigns in my soul, and there will reign for ever.  
 At such a sight, the warrior's eye might wet  
 His burning cheek; and all the *Roman* matrons,  
 Who lin'd the laurel'd way, agham'd, and sad,  
 Turn from a captive brighter than themselves.  
 But *Scipio* will be milder

*Lælius*

*Lælius.* I disdain  
 This thy surmise, and give it up to *Scipio*.  
 These passions are not comely.---Here to morrow  
 Comes the proconsul. Mean time, *Masiniſſa*,  
 Ah, harden not thy self in flattering hope!  
*Scipio* is mild, but steady.---Ha! the queen.  
 I think she hates a *Roman*.---and will leave thee.

## S C E N E V.

SOPHONISBA, MASINISSA.

*Soph.* Was not that *Roman Lælius*, as I enter'd,  
 Who parted gloomy hence?

*Mas.* Madam, the same.

*Soph.* Unhappy *Afric*! since these haughty *Romans*  
 Have in this lordly manner trod thy courts.

I read his fresh reproaches in thy face;  
 The lesson'd pupil in thy fallen look,  
 In that forc'd smile, which sickens on thy cheek.

*Mas.* Oh say not so, thou rapture of my soul!  
 For while I fondly gaze upon thy charms,  
 I smile as joyous as the sun in *May*;  
 Nor can my heart, by thee possess'd, retain  
 One painful thought.

*Soph.* Nay, tell me *Masiniſſa*;  
 How feels their tyranny, when 'tis brought home?  
 When, lawless grown, it touches what is dear?  
 Pomp for a while may dazle thoughtless man,  
 False glory bind him; but there is a time,  
 When ev'n the slave in heart will spurn his chains,  
 Nor know submission more.---What said thy tyrant?

*Mas.* His disappointment for a moment only  
 Burst in vain passion, and----

*Soph.* You stood abash'd;

You



You bore his threats, and tamely-silent heard him,  
 Heard the fierce *Roman* mark me for his triumph.  
 Oh meanness!

*Maf.* Banish that unkind suspicion.  
 The thought inflam'd my soul. I vow'd my life,  
 My last *Massylian* to the sword, ere he  
 Should touch thy freedom with the least dishonour.  
 But that from *Scipio*---

*Soph.* *Scipio!*

*Maf.* That from him----

*Soph.* I tell thee, *Mafiniffa*, if from him  
 You gain my freedom, from myself conceal it.  
 I shall disdain such freedom.

*Maf.* *Sophonisba!*

Thou all my heart holds precious! doubt no more.  
 Nor *Rome*, nor *Scipio*, nor a world combin'd  
 Shall tear thee from me; till outstretch'd I lie,  
 A nameless corpse!

*Soph.* If thy protection fails,  
 Of this at least be sure, be very sure,  
 To give me timely death.

*Maf.* Cease thus to talk,  
 Of death, of *Romans*, of unkind ambition.  
 My softer thoughts those rugged themes refuse,  
 And turn alone to love---All, all but thee,  
 All nature is a passing dream to me.  
 Fix'd in my view, thou dost for ever shine,  
 Thy form forth-beaming from the soul divine.  
 A spirit thine, which mortals might adore;  
 Despising love, and thence creating more.  
 Thou the high passions, I the tender prove,  
 Thy heart was form'd for glory, mine for love.

*The End of the Fourth Act.*

ACT



## ACT V. SCENE I.

MASINISSA, NARVA.

MASINISSA.

**H**AIL to the joyous day ! With purple clouds  
 The whole horizon glows. The breezy *Spring*  
 Stands loosely floating on the mountain-top,  
 And deals her sweets around. The sun too seems,  
 As conscious of my joy, with brighter beams  
 To gild the happy world ; and all things smile  
 Like *Sophonisba*. Love and friendship sure  
 Have mark'd this day with all their choicest blessings ;  
 Oh ! *Sophonisba's* mine ! and *Scipio* comes !

*Narva*. My lord, the trumpets speak his near approach.

*Mas*. I want his secret audience---Leave us, *Narva*.

## SCENE II.

SCIPIO, MASINISSA.

*Mas*. *Scipio* ! more welcome than my tongue can speak !

Oh greatly, dearly welcome ?

*Scipio*.*Masinissa* !

My heart beats back thy joy.---A happy friend,  
 Rais'd by his prudence, fortitude, and valour,  
 O'er all his foes ; and on his native throne,  
 Amidst his rescu'd shouting subjects, set :  
 Say, can the gods in lavish bounty give  
 A sight more pleasing ?

*Mas*.

My great friend ! and patron !

It was thy timely, thy restoring aid  
 That brought me from the fearful desert-life,  
 To live again in state, and purple splendor.

Thy

Thy friendship arm'd me with the strength of *Rome*,  
 And now I wield the scepter of my fathers,  
 See my dear people from the tyrants scourge,  
 From *Syphax* freed ; I hear their glad applauses ;  
 And to compleat my happiness, have gain'd  
 A friend worth all. O gratitude, esteem,  
 And love like mine, with what divine delight  
 Ye fill the heart !

*Scipio.* Heroic youth ! thy virtue  
 Has earn'd whate'er thy fortune can bestow,  
 It was thy patience, *Masiniſſa*, patience,  
 A champion clad in steel, that in the waste  
 Attended still thy step, and sav'd my friend  
 For better days. What cannot patience do !  
 A great design is seldom snatch'd at once ;  
 'Tis patience heaves it on. From savage nature,  
 'Tis patience that has built up human life,  
 The nurse of arts ! and *Rome* exalts her head  
 An everlasting monument of patience.

*Mas.* If I have that, or any virtue, *Scipio*,  
 'Tis copy'd all from thee.

*Scipio.* No *Masiniſſa*,  
 'Tis all unborrow'd, the spontaneous growth  
 Of nature in thy breast.---Friendship for once  
 Must, tho thou blushest, wear a liberal tongue ;  
 Must tell thee, noble youth, that long experience  
 In councils, battles, many a hard event,  
 Has found thee still so constant, so sincere,  
 So wise, so brave, so generous, so humane,  
 So well attemper'd, and so fitly turn'd  
 For what is either great or good in life,  
 As casts distinguish'd honour on thy country ;  
 And cannot but endear thee to the *Romans*.  
 For me, I think my labours all repaid,  
 My wars in *Afric*. *Masiniſſa*'s friendship  
 Rewards them all. Be that my dearest triumph,

To

To have assisted thy forlorn estate,  
 And lent a happy hand in raising thee  
 To thy paternal throne, usurp'd by *Syphax*.  
 The greatest service could be done my country,  
 Distracted *Afric*, and mankind in general,  
 Was thus to aid thy worth. To put the power  
 Of sovereign rule into the good man's hand,  
 Is giving peace and happiness to millions.

But has my friend, since late we parted armies,  
 Since he with *Lælius* acted such a brave,  
 Auspicious part against the common foe ;  
 Has he been blameless quite ? has he consider'd,  
 How pleasure often on the youthful heart,  
 Beneath the rosy soft disguise of love,  
 (All sweetness, smiles, and seeming innocence)  
 Steals unperceiv'd, and lays the victor low ?  
 I would not, cannot, put thee to the pain ---  
 --- It pains me deeper --- of the least reproach.  
 Let thy too faithful memory supply  
 The rest. (Pausing)

Thy silence, that dejected look,  
 That honest colour flushing o'er thy cheek,  
 Impart thy better soul.

*Maf.* Oh my good lord !  
 Oh *Scipio* ! Love has seiz'd me, tyrant love !  
 Inthralls my soul. I am undone by love !

*S. ipio.* And art thou then to ruin reconcil'd ?  
 Tam'd to destruction ! wilt thou be undone ?  
 Relinquish the towering thought ? the vast design,  
 With future glories big ? the warrior's wreath ?  
 The praise of senates ? an applauding world ?  
 All for a sigh ? all for a soft embrace ?  
 For a gay transient fancy, *Masiniſia* ?  
 For shame, my friend ! for honour's sake, for virtue's !  
 Sit not with folded arms, despairing weak,  
 Like a sick virgin sighing to the gale,  
 Till sure destruction comes----Alas, how chang'd  
From

From him, the man I lov'd !

*Maf.*

How chang'd indeed !

The time has been, when, fr'd from *Scipio's* tongue,  
My soul had mounted in a flame with his.---

Where is ambition flown ? Hopeless attempt !

Can love like mine be quell'd ? Can I forget

What still possesses, charms my thoughts for ever ?

Throw scornful from me what I hold most dear ?

Not feel the force of excellence ? To joy

Be dead ? And undelighted with delight ?

Hold, let me think a moment---no ! no ! no !

I am unequal to thy virtue, *Scipio* !

*Scipio.* Fie, *Magnus*, fie ! I y heavens ! I blush

At thy dejection, this degenerate language.

What ! perish for a woman ! Ruin all,

All the fair deeds which an admiring world

Hopes from thy riper years ; only to sooth

A stubborn fancy, a luxurious will ?

How must it, think you, sound in future story ?

Young *Masiniſſa* was a virtuous prince,

And *Afric* smil'd beneath his early ray ;

But that a *Carthaginian* captive came,

By whom untimely in the common fate

Of love he fell. The wise will scorn the page.

And all thy praise be some fond maid exclaiming,

Where are those lovers now ? O rather, rather,

Had I ne'er seen the vital light of heaven,

Than like the vulgar live, and like them die !

Ambition sickens at the very thought,---

To puff, and bustle here from day to day,

Lost in the passions of inglorious life,

Joys which the careless brutes possess above us.

And when some years, each duller than another,

Are thus elaps'd, in nauseous pangs to die ;

And pass away, like those forgotten things,

That soon become as they had never been.

*Maf.*



*Maf.* And am I dead to this ?

*S. pio.* The gods, my friend,  
Who train up heroes in misfortune's school,  
Have shook thee with adversity, with each  
Illustrious evil, that can raise, expand,  
And fortify the mind. Thy rooted worth  
Has stood these wintry blasts, grown stronger by  
them.

Shall then in prosperous times, while all is mild,  
All vernal, fair ; and glory blows around thee ;  
Shall then the *dear* *Scipio* of pleasure come,  
And lay thy faded honours in the dust ?

*Maf.* O gentle *Scipio* ! spare me, spare my weakness.

*Scipio.* Remember *Hannibal* ! --- A signal proof,  
A fresh example of destructive pleasure.  
He was the dread of nations, once of *Rome* !  
When from *Bellona*'s bosom, nurs'd in camps,  
And hard with toil, he down the rugged *Alps*,  
Rush'd like a torrent over *Italy* ;  
Unconquer'd, till the loose delights of *Capua*  
Sunk his victorious arm, his genius broke,  
Perfum'd, and made a lover of the heroine.  
Lo ! now he droops in *Bruttium*, fear'd no more,  
Remember him ; and yet resume thy spirit,  
Ere it be quite dissolv'd.

*Maf.* Shall *Scipio* stoop,  
Thus to regard, to teach me wisdom thus ;  
And yet a stupid anguish at my heart  
Repel whate'er he says ? --- But why, my friend,  
Why should we kill the best of passions, love ?  
It aids the heroine, bids ambition rise  
To nobler heights, inspires immortal deeds,  
Even softens brutes, and adds a grace to virtue.

*Scipio.* There is a holy tenderness indeed,  
A virtuous, social, sympathetic love,

That



That binds, supports, and sweetens human life.  
 But is thy passion such?---Lift, *Masiniſſa*,  
 While I the hardest office of a friend  
 Discharge; and, with a necessary hand,  
 A hand, tho' harsh at present, truly tender,  
 I paint this passion. And if then thou still  
 Art bent to sooth it, I must sighing leave thee,  
 To what the gods think fit.

*Mas.*

O never, *Scipio*!

O never leave me to myself! Speak on.  
 I dread, and yet desire thy friendly hand.

*Scipio.* I hope that *Masiniſſa* needs not now  
 Be told, how much his happiness is mine;  
 With what a warm benevolence I'd spring  
 To raise, confirm it, to prevent his wishes  
 In every right pursuit!---But while he rages,  
 Burns in a fever, shall I let him quaff  
 Delicious poison for a cooling draught,  
 In foolish pity to his thirst? shall I  
 Let a swift flame consume him as he sleeps,  
 Because his dreams are gay? shall I indulge  
 A frenzy flash'd from an infectious eye?  
 A sudden impulse unprov'd by reason?  
 Nay by thy cool deliberate thought condemn'd?  
 Resolv'd against?---A passion for a woman,  
 Who has abus'd thee basely? left thy youth,  
 Thy love as sweet, as tender as the spring,  
 The blooming hero for the hoary tyrant?  
 And now who makes thy sheltering arms alone  
 Her last retreat, to save her from the vengeance,  
 Which even her very perfidy to thee  
 Has brought upon her head?---Nor is this all.---  
 A woman who will ply her deepest arts,  
 (Ah too prevailing, as appears already)  
 Will never rest till *Syphax*' fate is thine;  
 Till friendship weeping flies, we join no more  
 In glorious deeds, and thou fall off from *Rome*?

I could

I could add too, that there is something cruel,  
Inhuman in thy passion. Does not *Syphax*,  
While thou rejoicest, die? The generous heart  
Should scorn a pleasure which gives others pain.

If this my friend, all this consider'd deep,  
Alarm thee not, nor rouse thy resolution,  
And call the hero from his wanton slumber,  
Then *Mesjina's* lost.

*Mesj.* Oh, I am pierc'd!

In every thought am pierc'd! 'Tis all too true,---  
I would, but can't deny it.---Whither, whither,  
Thro' what enchanted wilds have I been wandering?  
They seem'd *Elysium*, the delightful plains,  
The happy groves of heroes and of lovers:  
But the divinity that breathes in thee  
Has broke the charm, and I am in a desert,  
Far from the land of peace. It was but lately  
That a pure joyous calm o'erspread my soul,  
And reason tan'd my passions into bliss;  
When love came hurrying in, and with rash hand  
Mix'd them delirious, till they now ferment  
To misery,----There is no reasoning down  
This deep, deep anguish! this continual pang!  
A thousand things! when'er my raptur'd thought  
Runs back a little.---But I will not think. --  
And yet I must,---Oh Gods! that I could lose  
What a few hours have on my memory grav'd  
In adamant.

*Scipio.* But one strong effort more,  
And the fair field is thine --- A conquest far  
Excelling that o'er *Syphax*. What remains,  
Since now thy madness to thyself appears,  
But an immediate manly resolution,  
To shake off this effeminate disease;  
These soft ideas, which seduce thy soul,  
Make it all idle, weak, inglorious, wild,

A scene

A scene of dreams ; to give them to the winds,  
And be my former friend, thy self again ?

I joy to find thee touch'd by generous mo'ives,  
And that I need not bid thee recollect,  
Whose awful property thou hast usurp'd ;  
Need not assure thee, that the *Roman* people,  
The senators of *Rome*, will never suffer  
A dangerous woman, their devoted toe,  
A woman, whose irrefragable spirit  
Has in great part sustain'd this bloody war,  
Whole charms corrupted *Syphax* from their side,  
To ruin thee too, taint thy faithful breast,  
And kindle future war. No, fate itself  
Is not more steady to the right than they.  
And, where the publick good but seems concern'd,  
No motive their impenetrable hearts,  
Nor fear nor tenderness, can touch : such is  
The spirit, that has rais'd Imperial *Rome*.

*Mas.* Ah killing truth !----But I have promis'd,  
*Scipio!*

Have sworn to save her from the *Roman* power.  
My plighted faith is paid, my hand is given ;  
And, by the conscious gods ! who mark'd my vows,  
The whole united world shall never have her.  
For I will die a thousand thousand deaths,  
With all *Massyia* in one field expire ;  
Ere o the lowest wretch, much leis to her  
I love, to *Sophonisba*, to my queen,  
I violate my word.

*Scipio.* My heart approves  
Thy resolution, thy determin'd honour.  
Forever sacred be thy word, and oath.  
But, thus divided, how to keep thy faith  
At once to *Rome* and *Sophonisba* ; how  
To save her from our chains, and yet thyself  
From greater bondage ; this thy secret thought  
Can best inform thee.

*Mas.*

*Maj.* Agony ! Distraction !  
 These wilful tears ! --- O look not on me, *Scipio* !  
 For I'm a child again.

*Scipio.* Thy tears are no reproach.  
 Tears oft look graceful on the manly cheek.  
 The Cruel cannot weep. Lo ! Friendship's eye  
 Gives thee the drop it would refuse itself.  
 I know 'tis hard, wounds every bleeding nerve  
 About thy heart, thus to tear off thy passion.  
 But for that very reason, *Masiniſſa*,  
 'Tis hop'd from thee. The harder, thence results  
 The greater glory.----Why should we pretend  
 To conquer nations, and to rule mankind,  
 Pre-eminent in glory, place, and power,  
 While slaves at heart ? while by fantastic turns  
 Our frantic passions reign ? This very thought  
 Should turn our pomp to shame, disgrace our tri-  
 umphs ;

And, when the shouts of millions rend our ears,  
 Whisper reproach.---O ye celestial powers !  
 What is it, in a torrent of success,  
 To overflow the world ; if by the stream  
 Our own enfeebled minds are borne away  
 From reason and from virtue ? Real glory  
 Springs from the silent conquest of ourselves ;  
 And without that the conqueror is nought  
 But the first slave.---Then rescue thee, *Masiniſſa* !  
 Nor in one weakness all thy virtues lose ;  
 And, oh, beware of long, of vain repentance !  
*Maj.* Well ! well ! no more.---It is but dying too !

## S C E N E III.

*Scipio.* (*alone*) I wish I have not urg'd the truth  
 to rigour !  
 There is a time when virtue grows severe  
 Too much for nature, and even almost cruel.

S C E N E



# SOPHONISBA.

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## SCENE IV.

SCIPIO, LÆLIUS,

*Scipio.* Poor *Masiniſſa*, *Lælus*, is undone ;  
Betwixt his paſſion and his reaſon toſt  
In miſerable conflict.

*Lælius.*                      Entering, *Scipio*,  
He ſhot athwart me, nor vouchſaf'd one look ;  
Hung on his clouded brow I mark'd deſpair,  
And his eye glaring with ſome dire reſolve.  
Faſt o'er his cheek too ran the haſty tear.  
It were great pity that he ſhould be loſt.

*Scipio.* By heavens ! to loſe him were a ſhock, as if  
I loſt thee, *Lælius*, loſt my deareſt brother.  
Bound up in friendſhip from our infant years,  
A thouſand lovely qualities endear him,  
Only too warm of heart.

*Lælius.*                      What ſhall be done ?

*Scipio.* Here let it reſt, till time abates his paſſion.  
Nature is nature, *Lælius*, let the Wife  
Say what they pleaſe. But now perhaps he dies.---  
Haſte ! haſte ! and give him hope.---I have not time  
To tell thee what.---Thy prudence will direct ---  
Whatever is conſiſtent with my honour,  
My duty to the publick, and my friendſhip  
To him himſelf, ſay, promiſe, ſhall be done.  
I hope returning reaſon will prevent  
Our farther care.

*Lælius.*                      I fly with joy.

*Scipio.*                      His life  
Not only ſave, but *Sophoniſta's* too :  
For both I fear are in his paſſion mixt.

*Lælius.* It ſhall be done.

SCENE



## SCENE V.

*Scipio, (alone)* If friendship suffers thus;  
When love pours in his added violence,  
What are the pangs which *Masiniſſa* feels!

## SCENE VI.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA.

*Soph.* Yes, *Masiniſſa* loves me ---- Heavens! how fond!

But yet I know not what hangs on my spirit,  
A dismal boding: for this fatal *Scipio*,  
I dread his virtues; this prevailing *Roman*,  
Even now perhaps deludes the generous king,  
Fires his ambition with mistaken glory,  
Demands me from him; for full well he knows,  
That, while I live, I must intend their ruin,

*Phœ.* Madam, these fears ----

*Soph.* And yet it cannot be.  
Can *Scipio*, whom even hostile fame proclaims  
Of perfect honour, and of polish'd manners,  
Smooth, artful, winning, moderate, and wise,  
Make such a wild demand? Or, if he could,  
Can *Masiniſſa* grant it? give his queen,  
Whom love and honour bind him to protect,  
Yield her a captive to triumphant *Rome*?  
'Tis baseness to suspect it: 'tis inhuman.

What then remains?---Suppose they should resolve  
By right of war to seize me for their prize---  
Ay, there it kills!----What can his single arm,  
Against the *Roman* power? that very power  
By which he stands restor'd? Distracting thought!  
Still o'er my head the rod of bondage hangs.  
Shame on my weakness. --This poor catching hope,  
'This transient taste of joy, will only more  
Imbitter death.

*Phœ.*

*Phæn.*

A moment will decide.

Madam, till then ----

*Soph.*

Would I had dy'd before !

And am I dreaming here ? Here ! from the *Romans*  
 Beseeching I may live to swell their triumph ?  
 When my free spirit shou'd ere now have join'd  
 That great assembly, those devoted shades,  
 Who scorn'd to live till liberty was lost,  
 But ere their country fell, abhorr'd the light.

Whence this pale slave ? he trembles with his  
 message.

## S C E N E VII.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA ; and to them a SLAVE,  
 with a Letter and Poison from MASINISSA.

*Slave. (kneeling.)* This, Madam, from the king,  
 and this.

*Soph.*

Ha !---Stay.

*(Reads the Letter.)*

Rejoice, *Phænissa* ! Give me joy, my friend !  
 For here is liberty ! my fears are vain.  
 The hand of *Rome* can never touch me more !  
 Hail ! perfect freedom, hail !

*Phæn.*

How ? what ? my queen !

Ah ! what is this ?

*Soph.*

The first of blessings, death.

*Phæn.* Alas ! alas ! can I rejoice in that ?*Soph.* Shift not thy colour at the sound of death ;

For death appears not in a dreary light,  
 Seems not a blank to me, a loss of all  
 Those fond sensations, those enchanting dreams,  
 Which cheat a toiling world from day to day,  
 And form the whole of happiness they know.  
 It is to me perfection, glory, triumph.

VOL. II.

D

Nay

Nay fondly would I chuse it, tho persuaded  
 It were a long dark night without a morning,  
 To bondage far prefer it! since it is  
 Deliverance from a world where *Romans* rule,  
 Where violence prevails---And timely too---  
 Before my country falls; before I feel  
 As many stripes, as many chains, and deaths,  
 As there are lives in *Carthage*.---Glorious charter!  
 By which I hold immortal life and freedom,  
 Come, let me read thee once again.---And then,  
 Obey the mandate.

(*Reads the Letter aloud.*)

MASINISSA to his QUEEN.

*The Gods know with what pleasure I would have kept  
 my faith to Sophonisba in another manner. But since  
 this fatal bowl alone can deliver thee from the Romans;  
 call to mind thy father, thy country, that thou hast been  
 the wife of two kings; and act up to the dictates of thy  
 own heart. I will not long survive thee,*

Oh, 'tis wondrous well!

Ye Gods of death who rule the *Stygian* gloom!  
 Ye who have greatly dy'd! I come! I come!  
 I die contented, since I die a queen,  
 By *Rome* untouch'd, un sullied by their power;  
 So much their terror that I must not live.

And thou, go tell the king, if this is all  
 The nuptial present he can send his bride,  
 I thank him for it---But that death had worn  
 An easier face, before I trusted him.  
 Add, hither had he come, I could have taught  
 Him how to die.---I linger not, remember,  
 I stand not shivering on the brink of life;  
 And, but these votive drops, which grateful thus

(*Taking from them the poison.*)

To

To *Jove* the high *Deliverer* I shed,  
 Assure him that I drank it, drank it all,  
 With an unalter'd smile----Away. (*Drinks.*)

## S C E N E VIII.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA.

*Soph.* My friend !

In tears my friend ! Dishonour not my death  
 With womanish complaints. Weep not for me,  
 Weep for thyself, *Phœnissa*, for thy country,  
 But not for me. There is a certain hour,  
 Which one would wish all undisturb'd and bright,  
 No care, no sorrow, no dejected passions ;  
 And that is when we die, when hence we go,  
 Ne'er to be seen again ; then let us spread  
 A bold exalted wing, and the last voice  
 We hear, be that of wonder and applause.

*Phæn.* Who with such virtue wishes not to die !

*Soph.* And is the sacred moment then so near ?

The moment, when yon sun, those heavens, this  
 earth

Hateful to me, polluted by the *Romans*,  
 And all the busy slavish race of men,  
 Shall sink at once ; and strait another state,  
 New scenes, new joys, new faculties, new wonders,  
 Rise on a sudden round : but this the gods  
 In clouds and horror wrap, or none would live  
 Oh to be there !---my breast begins to burn ;  
 My tainted heart grows sick.---Ah me ! *Phœnissa*,  
 How many virgins, infants, tender wretches,  
 Must feel these pangs, ere *Carthage* is no more !

Soft---lead me to my couch---My shivering limbs,  
 Do this last office, and then rest for ever.

I pray thee weep not, pierce me not with groans.

The king too here---Nay then my death is full !

D 2

S C E N E



## SCENE IX.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA, MASINISSA, LÆLIUS,  
NARVA.

*Maf.* Has *Sophonisba* drank this cursed bowl?  
Oh horror! horror! what a sight is here!

*Soph.* Had I not drank it, *Masinissa*, then  
I had deserv'd it.

*Maf.* Exquisite distress!  
Oh bitter, bitter fate! and this last hope  
Compleats my woe.

*Soph.* When will these ears be deaf  
To misery's complaint? These eyes be blind  
To mischief wrought by *Rome*?

*Maf.* Too soon! too soon!--  
Ah why so hasty? But a little while  
Hadst thou delay'd this horrid draught; I then  
Had been as happy, as I now am wretched!

*Soph.* What means this talk of hope? of coward  
waiting?

*Maf.* What have I done? Oh heavens! I cannot  
think  
On my rash deed! But while I talk, she dies!  
And how? what? where am I then?---Say, canst  
thou

Forgive me, *Sophonisba*?

*Soph.* Yes, and more,  
More than forgive thee, thank thee, *Masinissa*.  
Hadst thou been weak, and dally'd with my freedom  
Till by proud *Rome* enslav'd; that injury  
I never had forgiven.

*Maf.* I came with life!  
*Lælius* and I from *Scipio* hasted hither;  
But death was here before us---this vile poison!

*Soph.*



# SOPHONISBA. 77

*Soph.* With life! --- There was some merit in the  
poison ;

But this destroys it all.---And couldst thou think  
Me mean enough to take it ?---Oh ! *Phœnissa*,  
This mortal toil is almost at an end.---  
Receive my parting soul.

*Phæn.* Alas, my queen !

*Maf.* Dies! dies! and scorns me!----- Mercy!

*Sophonisba !*

Grant one forgiving look, while yet thou canst ;  
Or death itself, the grave cannot relieve me :  
But with the furies join'd, my frantic ghost  
Will howl for ever.---Quivering! and pale!  
Have I done this ?

*Soph.* But for *Rome*

We might have been most happy.---I conjure thee  
Be mild to *Syphax* ; for my sake regard him,  
And let thy rage against him die with me.

Farewel !---'Tis done !---O never, never, *Carthage*,  
Shall I behold thee more ! (*Dies.*)

*Maf.* Dead ! dead ! oh dead !

Is there no death for me ?

(*Snatches Lælius's sword to stab himself.*)

*Lælius.* Hold, *Mafinissa* !

*Maf.* And wouldst thou make a coward of me,

*Lælius* ?

Have me survive that murder'd excellence ?

Did she not stir ? Ha ! Who has shock'd my brain !  
It whirls, it blazes.---Was it thou, old man ?

*Narva.* Alas ! alas !---good *Mafinissa*, softly !

Let me conduct thee to thy couch.

*Maf.* The grave

Shall be my couch.---Ye cannot make me live !  
Ye strive in vain!---Off!---crowd not thus around me !  
For I will hear, see, think no more !---Thou sun,  
Withhold thy hated beams ! And all I want  
Of thee, kind earth, is an immediate grave!

Ay, there she lies!---Why to that pallid sweetness  
Can not I, Nature! lay my lips, and die!

(*Throws himself beside her.*)

*Lælius*. See there the ruins of the noble mind  
When from calm reason passion tears the sway.  
What pity she should perish!---Cruel war,  
'Tis not the least misfortune in thy train,  
That oft by thee, the brave destroy the brave.  
She had a *Roman* soul; for every one  
Who loves, like her, his country, is a *Roman*.

Whether on *Afric's* sandy plains he glows,  
Or lives untam'd among *Riphean* snows.  
If generous liberty the breast inflame,  
'The gloomy *Lybian* then deserves that name:  
And, warm with freedom under frozen skies,  
In farthest *Britain* *Romans* yet may rise.

*The End of the Fifth Act.*

EPILOGUE

# EPILOGUE.

By a FRIEND.

Spoken by Mrs. CIBBER.

**N**OW, I'm afraid, the modest taste in vogue  
Demands a strong, high-season'd epilogue.  
Else might some silly soul take pity's part,  
And odious virtue sink into the heart.

Our squeamish author scruples this proceeding ;  
He says it hurts sound morals, and good breeding :  
Nor Sophonisba would he here produce,  
A glaring model, of no private use.  
Ladies, he bids me say, behold your Cato.  
What tho no Stoic she, nor read in Plato ?  
Yet sure she offer'd, for her country's sake,  
A sacrifice, which Cato could not make ---  
--- Already, now, these wicked men are sneering,  
Some wrestling what one says, and others leering.  
I vow they have not force for---publick spirit.  
That, ladies, must be your superior merit.

Mercy forbid ! we should lay down our lives ;  
Like these old, Punic, barbarous heathen wives.  
Spare Christian blood.---But sure the devil's in her,  
Who for her country would not lose a pinner.  
---Lard ! how could such a creature shew her face ?  
How ?---Just as you do there---thro Brussels Lace.  
The Roman fair, the public in distress,  
Gave up the dearest ornaments of dress.

## EPILOGUE.

*How much more cheaply might you gain applause ?  
---One yard of Ribban and two ells of Gause.  
And Gause each deep-read critic must adore ;  
Your Roman ladies dress'd in Gause all o'er.  
Should you fair patriots, come to dress so thin ;  
How clear might all your---sentiments be seen.  
To foreign looms no longer owe your charms ;  
Nor make their trade more fatal than their arms.  
Each British dame, who courts her country's praise,  
By quitting these outlandish modes, might raise  
(Not from yon powder'd band, so thin and spruce)  
Ten able bodied men, for ---publick use.*

*But now a serious word about the play,---  
Auspicious smile on this his first essay ;  
Ye generous Britons ! your own sons inspire ;  
Let your applauses fan their native fire.  
Then other Shakespears yet may rouse the Stage,  
And other Otways melt another age.*

---

---

*A NUPTIAL SONG, intended to have been  
inserted in the Fourth Act.*

COME, gentle *Venus*! and assuage  
A warring world, a bleeding age.

For nature lives beneath thy ray,  
The wintry tempests haste away,  
A lucid calm invests the sea,  
Thy native deep is full of thee ;  
The flowering earth, where'er you fly,  
Is all o'er spring, all sun the sky.  
A genial spirit warms the breeze ;  
Unseen among the blooming trees,  
The feather'd lovers tune their throat,  
The desert growls a soften'd note,  
Glad o'er the meads the cattle bound,  
And love and harmony go round.

But chief into the human heart  
You strike the dear delicious dart ;  
You teach us pleasing pangs to know,  
To languish in luxurious woe,  
To feel the generous passions rise,  
Grow good by gazing, mild by sighs ;



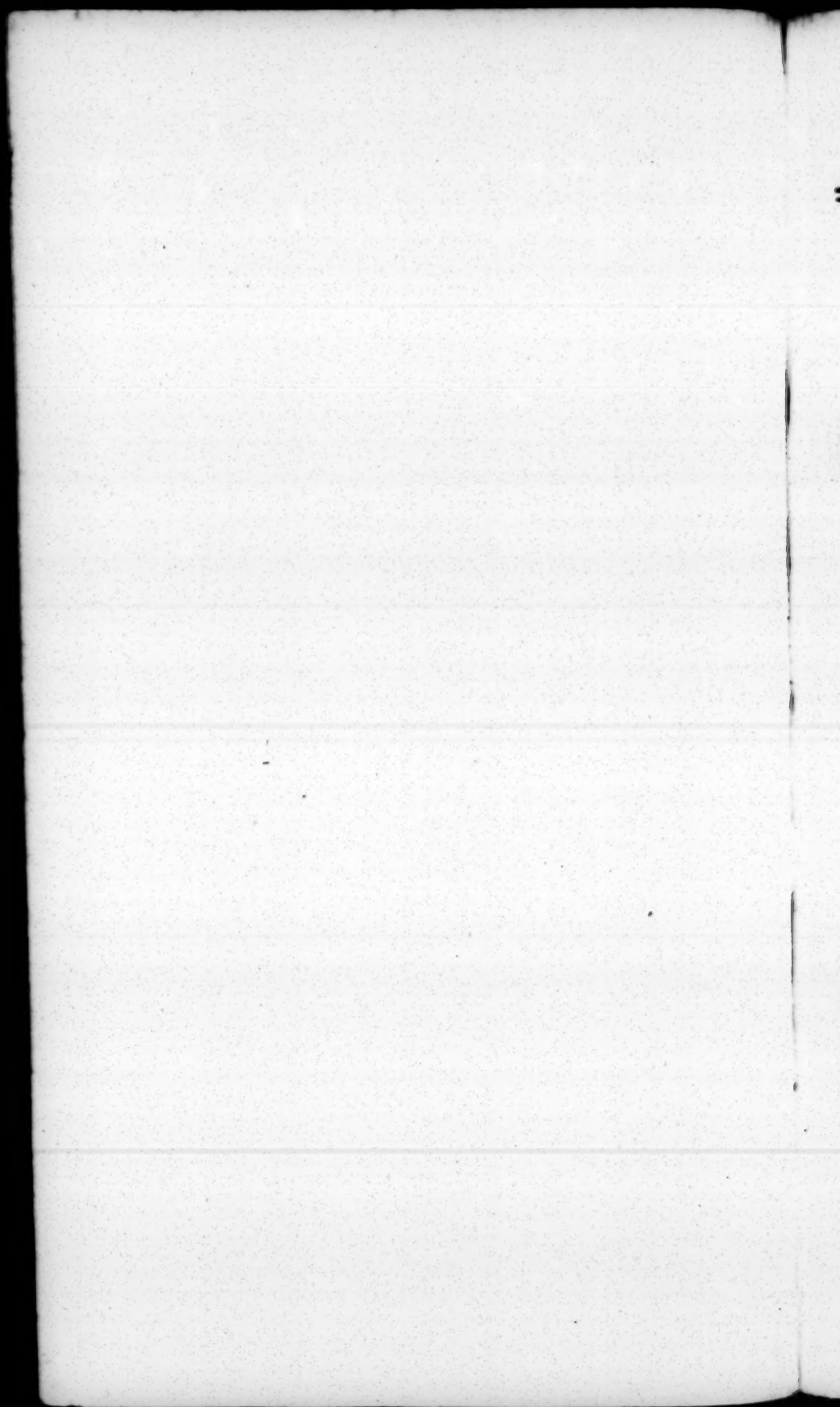
Each happy moment to improve,  
 And fill the perfect year with love.

Come, thou delight of heaven and earth !  
 To whom all creatures owe their birth ,  
 Oh come, sweet smiling ! tender, come !  
 And yet prevent our final doom.  
 For long the furious god of war  
 Has crush'd us with his iron car,  
 Has raged along our ruined plains,  
 Has foil'd them with his cruel stains,  
 Has sunk our youth in endless sleep,  
 And made the widow'd virgin weep.  
 Now let him feel thy wonted charms ;  
 Oh take him to thy twining arms !  
 And, while thy bosom heaves on his,  
 While deep he prints the humid kifs,  
 Ah then ! his stormy heart controul,  
 And sigh thyself into his soul.

*AGAMEMNON.*

A

TRAGEDY.



---

---

TO HER  
ROYAL HIGHNESS  
THE  
Princess of *Wales*.

MADAM,

I HUMBLY beg leave to put this Tragedy under the Projection of Your Royal Highness ; and hope You will condescend to accept of it, as a Testimony

D E D I C A T I O N.

mony of the most unfeigned and zealous Respect, due no less to Your Amiable Virtues, than to Your High Rank, from,

M A D A M,

YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS'S

*Most Dutiful and most*

*Obedient Humble Servant,*

JAMES THOMSON.



# PROLOGUE.

By the Author of EURYDICE.

Spoken by Mr. QUIN.

**W**HEN this decisive night, at length, appears,  
The night of every author's hopes and fears;  
What shifts to bribe applause, poor poets try?  
In all the forms of wit they court and lye:  
These meanly beg it, as an alms; and Those,  
By boastful bluster dazzle and impose.

Nor poorly fearful, nor securely vain  
Ours would, by honest ways, that grace obtain,  
Would, as a free-born wit, be fairly try'd:  
And then let truth and candour, fair, decide.  
He courts no friend, who blindly comes to praise;  
He dreads no foe---but whom his faults may raise.

Indulge a generous pride, that bids him own,  
He aims to please, by noble means, alone;  
By what may win the judgment, wake the heart,  
Inspiring nature, and directing art;  
By scenes, so wrought, so rais'd, as may command  
Applause, more from the head, than from the hand.

Important is the moral we would teach:  
(Oh may this Island practise what we preach!)  
Vice in its first approach with care to shun;  
The wretch who once engages, is undone.  
Crimes lead to greater crimes, and link so streight,  
What first was accident, at last is fate:  
Guilt's hapless servant sinks into a slave;  
And virtue's last sad strugglings cannot save.

" As such our fair attempt, we hope to see  
" Our judges here---at least---from influence free;  
" One place,---unbias'd yet by party-rage,---  
" Where only honour votes,---the British stage.  
" We ask for justice, for indulgence sue:  
" Our last best licence must proceed from you.

PER-

## PERSONS represented.

|                                                                                                    |        |                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AGAMEMNON,<br>EGISTHUS,<br>MELISANDER,<br>ARCAS,<br>ORESTES,<br>TALTHYBIUS Herald<br>OFFICERS, &c. | } by { | Mr. <i>Quin.</i><br>Mr. <i>Milward.</i><br>Mr. <i>Cibber.</i><br>Mr. <i>Wright.</i><br>Mr. <i>Green.</i><br>Mr. <i>Harvard.</i> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

|                                                                                               |        |                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CLYTEMNESTRA,<br>CASSANDRA,<br>ELECTRA,<br>ATTENDANT of Clytemnestra,<br>TROJAN Captives, &c. | } by { | Mrs. <i>Porter.</i><br>Mrs. <i>Cibber.</i><br>Miss <i>Brett.</i><br>Mrs. <i>Furnival.</i> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## S C E N E.

The Palace of AGAMEMNON, in *Mycenæ.*

---

# AGAMEMNON.

A

## TRAGEDY.

---

### ACT I. SCENE I.

CLYTEMNESTRA *sitting in a disconsolate posture, and*  
*her ATTENDANT.*

ATTENDANT.

O *Clytemnestra* ! O my royal mistress !  
Can then no comfort sooth your woes a while ?  
E'er since that flaming signal of sackt *Troy*,  
That signal fix'd and promis'd by the king,  
Was seen some nights ago, nor food has pass'd  
Your loathing lips, nor sleep has bless'd your eyes.  
Or if perhaps a transient slumber hush'd  
Your sighs a moment, and restrain'd your tears ;  
Sudden, you, starting wildly, would exclaim  
Of Guilt, *Egisthus*, *Troy* and *Agamemnon*.  
Sure, 'tis too much, my queen.

*Cly.*

Away ! away !

Since my lost state admits of no relief,  
To that sad comfort of the wretched leave me,  
To yield me to my sorrows.

*Atten.*

Hear me, madam.

Once the dear burden of these aged arms !  
My tender care from life's first opening bud !

My

My joy ! my glory ! hear your faithful servant,  
 And let me add, your friend---In reason's eye,  
 That never judges on a partial view,  
 Far less than your misfortune is your guilt.---  
 Your guilt---Forgive me, 'tis too harsh a word,  
 For what deserves compassion more than blame.  
 I know the treacherous ways by which you sunk,  
 From pleasing peace, to these unhappy fears,  
 This anxious tumult.---

*Cly.*

Hide me from the view !

All comfort is in vain.---Away !

*Atten.*

Allow me,

To plead your injur'd cause against your self.

When *Agamemnon* led the *Greeks* to *Troy*,  
 And left you, madam, for the pomp of war,  
 Left you the pride of *Greece* in full-blown beauty,  
 The kindest mother, and the fondest wife ;  
 If *Fame* says true, for *Trojan* captives left you---  
 But that apart.---How did he leave you, say ?  
 Afflicted, out-rag'd, as a queen and mother ;  
 Betray'd to *Aulis* with your first-born Hope,  
 The blooming *Iphigenia*, under feint  
 Of her immediate marriage to *Achilles* ;  
 And there no sooner had the wind-bound fleet  
 Arriv'd, but you beheld her spotless blood  
 Stream on the sully'd altar of *Diana*,  
 The price of winds, of a dear-purchas'd gale,  
 To bear them on to *Troy*. Thus pierc'd with grief,  
 Then fir'd by turns to rage, almost to vengeance,  
 At an ambitious cruel haughty husband ;  
 While all your passions were together mix'd,  
 And ready for a change ; was you not left  
 In a submissive soothing lover's power,  
 Ordain'd your partner in the sovereign rule,

O'er *Argos* and *Mycenæ*, but to you  
As pliant still as *Agamemnon* stately ?

*Clytemnestra, rising.*

Alas ! too true ! You touch the source of woe.  
Why did you leave me barbarous *Agamemnon* ?  
Why leave me weeping o'er a murder'd daughter ?  
Why helpless leave me to a troubled mind ?  
Ah ! why yourself betray me to a lover ?  
What arts *Egisthus* us'd too well I know ;  
All that can softly steal, or gayly charm,  
The heart of woman----Hence, dear sad ideas,  
Destroyers hence ! And dare you tempt me still,  
Perfidious *Sirens* ! in that very moment  
When your false charms have wreckt my peace for  
ever ?

Oh, nature ! wherefore, nature, are we form'd  
One contradiction ? the continual sport  
Of fighting powers ? Oh ! wherefore hast thou sown  
Such war within us, such unequal conflict,  
Between slow reason and impetuous passion ?  
Passion resistless hurries us away,  
Ere lingering reason to our aid can come,  
And to upbraid us then it only serves.  
Tormentor, cease !

*Atten.* You wrong yourself too much.  
Think, madam, how for years you baffled love :  
Nor could *Egisthus*, tho he touch'd your heart,  
Tho many a midnight tear, and secret sigh,  
To me, and me alone, disclos'd the pangs,  
That dim'd your fading cheek ; yet could he not,  
With all his arts, his love, submission, charms,  
O'ercome the struggling purpose of your soul ;  
Till *Melissander*, to a desert isle,  
He banish'd from your ear.

*Cly.* Ah, *Melissander* !  
Given to the beasts a prey, or wilder famine ;

Ah,



Ah, perish'd friend ! serene directing light,  
 By *Agamemnon* left to guide my counsels ;  
 Whom every science, every muse adorn'd,  
 While the good honest heart enrich'd them all ;  
 Oh hadst thou still remain'd, then I, this day,  
 Had been as glorious as I now am wretched !  
 There breathes a felt divinity in virtue,  
 In candid unassuming generous virtue,  
 Whose very silence speaks ; and which inspires,  
 Without proud formal lessons a disdain  
 Of mean injurious vice. But lost with him,  
 With *Melisander*, reason, honour, pride,  
 Truth, sound advice, my better genius fled ;  
 I friendless, flatter'd, importun'd and charm'd  
 Was left alone with all-seducing love ;  
 Love to the future blind, each sober thought,  
 Each consequence despising, scorning all,  
 But what its own enchanting dreams suggest.  
 What could I do ?---Away ! self-flattering guilt !  
 I should have thought, when honour once is fully'd,  
 Not weeping mercy's tears can wash it clean ;  
 And that one blot on mine diffus'd a stain  
 O'er the proud honour of a wedded king,  
 And o'er my children's, my poor blameless children's !  
 Whose cheeks will kindle at their mother's name :  
 I should have thought--Would I could think no more !  
 To think is torture !

*Atten.*

What avails it, madam---

*Cly.*

O *Melisander* ! If the dead could hear,  
 I would invoke thy friendly influence now,  
 Would wish thee present in this hour of trouble.  
 Perhaps there is in wisdom, gentle wisdom,  
 That knows our frailties, therefore can forgive,  
 Some healing comfort for a guilty mind,  
 Some power to charm it into peace again,

And

And bid it smile a new with right affections.  
 No ! fruitless wish !---It cannot, cannot be !  
*Egisthus* who may henceforth give me laws,  
 Dread of discovery, that worst tyrant, shame,  
 And my own conscious blotted heart forbid it,  
 Forbid retreat---

*Atten.* Madam, behold the man,  
 Who, then upon the watch observ'd the signal  
 Of conquer'd *Troy*, and now attends your orders  
 To give a full account of what he saw.

## S C E N E II.

CLYTEMNESTRA, *her ATTENDANTS and the MAN*  
*who observed the signal.*

*Cly.* Are you then sure that you beheld this signal ?

Or was it not some vision of the brain,  
 That painted, while you slept, your waking wish ?  
 Or else perhaps some meteor of the night ?

*Man.* Madam, *Troy* doubtless lies one heap of ruins ;

I saw the signal of its fate distinctly.  
 The night was dark and still. A heavier gloom  
 Ne'er cover'd earth. In low'ring clouds, the stars  
 Were muffled deep ; and not one ray, below,  
 O'er all *Mycenæ* glimmer'd, or around it.  
 When strait, at farthest east, a ruddy light  
 Sprung up, and, wide-encreasing, roll'd along ;  
 By turns diminish'd, and by turns renew'd,  
 A wave of fire : at last, it flam'd, confes'd,  
 From isle to isle, and beachy point to point :  
 Till the last blaze at *Nauplia* ended, plain.  
 A glorious sight ! and as a *Greek* rejoic'd me.

*Cly.*

*Cly.* How fits the wind ?

*Man.* It blows from *Troy*, direct ;

A bold and steady gale.

*Cly.* 'Tis well. Retire.

Your care and faithful pains shall be rewarded.

## S C E N E III.

CLYTEMNESTRA, *her* ATTENDANT.

*Cly.* He comes ! he comes ! the hapless victor  
comes !

Even now his trophy'd vessel streaks the main,  
And ploughs the billows with triumphant prow ;  
Or, by glad crowds receiv'd, perhaps, he hails  
His native shore, and presses on to shame.  
Ev'n now with glory charg'd, with conquest gay,  
Crown'd with the laurels of ten famous years,  
He dreams to join them to the peaceful olive ;  
And after rugged toils and perilous war,  
Soft to repose him on the myrtle bed  
Of calm domestic bliss. How vain the hopes !  
How short the prospect of believing man !  
I dare not look before me, dare not paint  
The rising storm.

*Atten.* Behold *Egisthus*, Madam,

*Cly.* Leave me.

S C E N E

SCENE IV.

CLYTEMNESTRA, EGISTHUS.

*Egisthus (after some silence.)*

And is it thus, O *Clytemnestra* !

Thus that, in hours of danger, lovers meet ?

*(pausing.)*

Still coldy silent, still the look averted,  
Where not one softness glows ? While anger, fear,  
Disgust and sick repentance, shifting, cloud  
Your vary'd cheek. 'Tis plain you never lov'd.

*Cly.* Oh that I never had !

*Egist.* You never did.

The very power to wish it proves you did not.

*Cly.* He ne'er deserv'd my love, who dares suspect it.

*Egist.* Not to suspect it weakness were and folly.

*Cly.* Nor only doubt ; believe your doubts.

*Egist.*

I do.

*Cly.* You do !

*Egist.* Nay more, am of their truth assur'd.

*Cly.* 'Tis base, ungrateful, and ungenerous insult,  
To tell me this. Urge not too far, *Egisthus*,  
Urge not too far my guilt-dejected spirit.

Tho you have trampled on my haughty virtue,  
That noble pride of soul, which knows no fear,

And bears no insult ; yet to you, at least,

To you of all mankind, I will be bold,

As I had never err'd, will be a queen,

The blood of *Jove*, be *Clytemnestra* still.

*Egist.* Be temperate, madam : I have told you  
nothing,

But that I am not worthy of your love.

*Cly.* Curse on that pride ! which, with affected  
brow,

Humility conceals. And am I then so vile,

So



So lost to reason, honour, common honour;  
 As without love, that all-compelling fury,  
 Without debasing, thoughtless, blind blind love;  
 To bow me from the height of happy life,  
 To this low fearful state of coward shame?  
 Mistake me not---I would not waste one word,  
 One passing word, affronted thus to save you  
 From jealousy's worst rage; did not, alas!  
 A kind of mournful justice to my self  
 Tear from my swelling heart the mean confession.  
 How art thou fallen! to what dishonour fallen!  
 Unhappy *Clytemnestra*!

*Egist.*

Harsh Construction!

And yet these frowns delight, that anger charms me.

O more than lovely! O majestic fair-one!

Since you then knew the jealous force of love,  
 Forgive its tender fears, its fond offence;  
 Offence I could not mean.

*Cly.*

Ill-fated she!

Who must forgive.

*Egist.*

Nay rather cast me from you,

Than thus upbraid me with so forc'd a pardon.

O *Clytemnestra*! where are now those looks,  
 Those looks of smiling heaven, of radiant sweetness,  
 That wak'd our morn of love? Within whose sphere,  
 No evil durst approach, no sadness dwell;  
 While the charm'd gazer knew nor fear nor danger!  
 And set thee then at last in gloomy quarrels?  
 Let us not quarrel. Why should lovers quarrel?  
 Life is for that too short, too precious time;  
 These moments chiefly, these impetuous moments,  
 That to the brink of ruin seem to roll  
 Our mingled fate. Even now ---

*Cly.*

'Tis true! 'Tis true!

Alas! methinks, in every hollow blast,  
 That shakes this palace, *Agamemnon* comes,  
 Yes, yes, *Egisthus*, still a proof remains,



A matchless proof of love, I mean to give you.  
 Glad will I throw this regal pomp aside,  
 And, instant, with you seek some distant country,  
 Some gloomy *Thracian* Dale, where piny *Hemus*  
 May wrap us in impenetrable shade :  
 There, there, the coarsest life, fed by hard toil,  
 Will be luxurious ease to what I feel,  
 To this big pang that labours at my heart,  
 And fires my mingling passions into anguish.  
 Quick ! let us fly, *Egisthus*, fly this moment !  
 The next may seize us, bind us down to shame,  
 Detested shame !

*Egis.* What ! *Clytemnestra* ! fly !

That is indeed the road direct to shame,  
 To infamy for ever. He who flies,  
 In war or peace, who his great purpose yields,  
 He is the only villain of this world :  
 But he who labours firm and gains his point,  
 Bewhat it will, which crowns him with success,  
 He is the son of fortune and of fame,  
 By those admir'd, those specious villains most,  
 That ehe had bellow'd out reproach against him.

Besides, your husband, your vain-glorious husband,  
 Proud *Agamemnon*, who ten years has warr'd  
 At *Troy*, to scourge your sister *Hele*'s rape,  
 Dream you that he would not pursue our flight,  
 Tho' we took shelter in *Cimmerian* shades,  
 And drag us back, the scorn of hissing *Greece*,  
 To then deserv'd, to true, unpy'd shame.

*Cl.* Excuse my weaker heart. But how, *Egisthus*,  
 How shall I bear an injur'd husband's eye ?  
 The fiercest foe wears not a look so dreadful,  
 As does the man we wrong.

*Egis.*

Madam, your fears  
 Can a false glare upon your troubled reason,  
 That blinds it quite.---An injur'd husband he !

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He

He wrong'd ! No, *Clytemnestra* never, never,  
 Can never wrong her tyrant *Agamemnon*,  
 Tyrant of common *Greece* ; can never wrong  
 The man who leaves her ten regardless years,  
 For the vain honours of a foolish war ;  
 Nay, who consum'd those years, if fame speaks true,  
 In nothing less than war ; instead of war,  
 In shameful squabbles with his nobler friends,  
 About their captive females, training out  
 An amorous revel rather than a war,  
 Far from his country, family and queen.  
 And can you wrong this false-one ? Think of *Aulis*.  
 How basely to that port you was betray'd,  
 And what dire nuptials waited there your daughter.  
 Think with what price he bought his cruel trophies.  
 Behold the first-born blossom of your youth,  
 Your *Iphigenia*, her mild eyes dejected,  
 Her cheek o'ercast with fear, her bosom bare,  
 An helpless, harmless, uncomplaining victim,  
 Stab'd by the murderous *Calchas* ! whilst her father,  
 Her unrelenting father, to protect  
 The sacrifice, stands by. Behold, she bleeds,  
 Pours the rich stream she drew from that fair bosom,  
 Falls like a drooping flower untimely cut ;  
 And all to purchase for her sire's impatience,  
 From some fell demon that bely'd *Diana*,  
 A rising gale. The gale begins to blow,  
 The pendants flutter ; when away he goes,  
 Gayly he goes ; and leaves a wretched mother,  
 To weep her murder'd child.---If yet one spark  
 Of wanted spirit burns in *Clytemnestra*,  
 If she still lives to justice and to nature ;  
 These, these are wrongs, that call aloud for vengeance ;  
 And there are hands that boldly---start not, madam---  
 That will with pride avenge you.

*Cly.*

Ha ! what hands ?

What vengeance, say ? Touch not so wild a string ;

It wakes new discord in my jarring soul.  
 To the just gods, not us, pertaineth vengeance.  
 I cannot, will not, e'er consent to---Gods!  
 Where roves my tongue?---You did not mention that,  
 You did not mean it sure---Oh spare, *Egisthus*,  
 In pity spare my last remains of virtue!  
 Oh make me not beyond recovery vile!  
 A horror to myself!--How wretched they,  
 Who feel, yet cannot save, their dying virtue!

(*A shout heard.*)

What means this transport of the madning people?  
 Oh my presaging heart!--Save me!--Again!  
 Ah! little think they how their joy distracts me!

*Egist.* Some move this way---Resume your temper,  
 madam.

S C E N E V.

To CLYTEMNESTRA an OFFICER belonging to the  
 court.

*Off.* Madam, the king is near, from *Nauplia* comes;  
 But such rejoicing crouds around him throng,  
 As makes his journey flow. Just now arriv'd  
*Talthybius* brings the news, and craves admittance.

*Cly.* Conduct him hither.

S C E N E VI.

*Cly. (alone.)* Oh too faithful signal!  
 Now must I take another step in vice.  
 Down, stubborn heart! and learn dissimulation:  
 Yes, learn to smile, tho sorrow wrap thee round;  
 Learn to be friends with baseness.---See! how gay  
 This herald strides along! Mistaken man!

## S C E N E VII.

CLYTEMNESTRA, TALTHYBIUS, *with some Grecian soldiers that attend him:*

*Cly.* Welcome, *Talthybius*; welcome, ye brave Greeks.  
How fares the king?

*Tal.* Madam, the king is well;  
Health, happiness, and glory, join to crown him.  
His heart, impatient to confer with yours,  
Sends me before him with its warmest wishes,  
Its warmest gratulations. Tell, he said,  
"Go tell my *Clytemnestra*, that the thoughts  
"Of meeting her awake a dearer joy  
"Than conquest ever gave: even tedious seems  
"My people's love, that loses me a moment."

This crown which circled once the royal brows  
Of *Hecuba*, of *Priam's* lofty queen,  
He prays you to accept.

*Cly.* There set it down.  
I own, *Talthybius*, the soft moisture fills  
My womanish eyes, while on the sudden turns  
Of fate I think, on fortune's sad reverses.  
Oft when blind mortals think themselves secure,  
In height of bliss, they touch the brink of ruin.  
But sure your voyage has been wondrous quick,  
Not three full days.---Is all the fleet re'urn'd?

*Tal.* No, madam; none, except this single ship,  
Which bore the king: the rest are scatter'd wide.

When to the joyous breeze we spread our sails,  
And left that bay, where *Simois* and *Scamander*  
Mix with the rapid *Hellepont*; while *Troy*,  
Or what was *Troy*, yet wreathing smoke to heaven,  
And *Ida's* woody top, receding, sunk  
Beneath the trembling main, the sky was fair;  
And, wing'd our course with slender airs, we sail'd,  
Till strait, as evening fell, the fluttering gale,

Increasing



Increasing gradual, from the red north-east,  
 Blew stiff and fierce. At last the tempest howl'd,  
 Next morning, nought but angry seas and skies  
 Appear'd, conflicting, round. Mean time, right on,  
 Our strong-ribb'd vessel drove before the blast,  
 That, falling somewhat off its fury, gave us  
 A quick auspicious voyage. Safe, we pass'd  
 The *Cyclad* isles, that, o'er the troubled deep,  
 Seem'd then to float amidst the mingling storm.  
 Only at one, with much ado, we touch'd,  
 Nor without risque.

*Cly.* And why?

*Tal.* Madam, compell'd  
 By sacred pity. On the foaming beach,  
 A miserable figure beck'ning stood,  
 Horrid and wild, with famine worn away ;  
 His plaintive voice, half by the murmuring surge  
 Absorb'd, just reach'd our ears. In *Greek* he call'd,  
 And strong adjur'd us by the gentle gods,  
 That make the wretched their peculiar care,  
 To bear him thence, from savage solitude,  
 Into the chearful haunts of men again.

*Cly.* What?---Of condition look'd he?

*Tal.* So he seem'd ;  
 Tho' dim'd by helpless solitary life.  
 The king regards him much---Forgive me, madam ;  
 I see the rueful image but disturbs  
 Your generous soul.

*Cly.* I thank you, good *Talthybius* ;  
 And from the king himself will learn the rest.  
 This ring, on which a victory is carv'd  
 With curious art, befits the news you bring :  
 I am your debtor still ; and, soldiers, yours.

*The End of the First Act.*

E 3

A C T



## ACT II. SCENE I.

CLYTEMNESTRA, ATTENDANT.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

**A**Rriv'd so soon! I am not half prepar'd :  
My features all are sunk with conscious shame ;  
My eyes are yet too tender to dissemble.

*Attend.* Madam, be firm. Wipe off these gloomy  
tears,

In which too plain is read your troubled soul.  
Just now the trumpet spoke the king's approach.

*Cly.* 'Tis come, at last, the trying hour is come !  
Oh that my heart were hard, and features false !---  
Again these trumpets swell.---

*Attend.* A moment, madam,  
A moment will betray you.

*Cly.* Open, earth,  
And swallow up my shame !---What can I do ?  
Where look ? what say ? confusion ! torture !

*Attend.* Madam !---

*Cly.* Ah, coward that I am ! Was there no dagger,  
To save this ten-fold death ?

*Attend.* Hark ! loud and near,  
The triumph comes.

*Cly.* Well.---give me breath---

*(Endeavouring to compose her agitation.*  
*Agamemnon, behind the Scenes.*

A moment,  
Leave me, my friends.

*Cly.* Ha ! heard you not his voice ?  
Yes, yes, 'tis he ! Go, bring my children hither :  
They may relieve me.

*Attend.* O remember !

*Cly.* Heavens !

SCENE

## SCENE II.

AGAMEMNON, CLYTEMNESTRA.

*Aga.* Where is my life ! my love ! my *Clytemnestra* !  
O let me press thee to my fluttering soul,  
That is on wing to mix itself with thine !  
O thou, for whom I live, for whom I conquer,  
Than glory brighter ! O my *Clytemnestra* !  
Now, in this dear embrace, I lose the toils  
Of ten years war ; absence, with all its pains,  
Is by this charming moment wip'd away.  
All-bounteous gods ! Sure, never was a heart  
So full, so blest as mine.--- (*Discovering her disorder.*

But whence, my fairest !

What mean these tears ?---Not tears of happy love,  
Such as I shed.---What means that clouded look,  
Whose downcast sweetness will not shine upon me ?  
Why this cold meeting ? Why unkindly damp'd  
My ardor thus ? Oh speak, my *Clytemnestra* !

*Cly.* Forgive me, *Agamemnon* ; but I cannot,

Alas ! I cannot see your face again,  
Without reflecting where I saw you last.

*Aulis* is present to my eyes anew,  
The ships, the chiefs, the guards, the bloody *Calchas*,  
All the dire pomp of sacrifice around :  
Anew my daughter bleeds, basely deceiv'd !  
And when I see that awful brow, that doom'd her,  
Can *Agamemnon* wonder at my tears ?

*Aga.* Why will my *Clytemnestra* add new stings  
To what here rankles but too deep already ?  
Ah ! why impute to me the work of fate ?  
'Tis not indulging private inclination,  
The selfish passion, that sustains the world,  
And lends its rulers grace ; no, 'tis not thence

That glory springs, and high immortal deeds :  
 The public good, the good of others, still  
 Must bear fond nature down, in him who dares  
 Aspire to worthy rule ; imperious honour  
 Still o'er the most distinguish'd lords it most.  
 Was it for me ?---Let even your passions judge---  
 For *Agamemnon* was it, when ordain'd,  
 By common voice the general of the *Greeks* ;  
 While twenty kings beneath my banner march'd ;  
 And while around me full assembled *Greece*,  
 Indignant, kindled at your sister's rape,  
 On her old native foe demanding vengeance,  
 On faithless *Asia* : Was it then for me,  
 To quench this glorious flame ? And to refuse  
 One life to thousands, to those generous thousands,  
 'That for my honour, for the dearer honour  
 Of *Clytemnestra*'s family, stood all  
 Prepar'd to die ? If to the mingled voice  
 Of honour, duty, glory, public good,  
 Of the commanding gods, I had been deaf ;  
 And, in the feeble father, poorly sunk  
 'The *Greek*, the chief, the patriot and the king,  
 Greater than king, the general of the *Greeks* ;  
 'Then you yourself, my *Clytemnestra*'s self,  
 Must (let her heart avow the truth) have scorn'd me,  
 Nor think it was an easy resignation.  
 Oh *Clytemnestra* ! Had you seen within,  
 What here within my tortur'd bosom pass'd ;  
 To that my battles since were only sport.  
 No, not the kindest mother, bath'd in tears,  
 As o'er her agonizing babe she hangs,  
 Feels what I suffer'd then---You may remember---  
 Again the father melts me at the thought---  
 You may remember how I hid my face ;  
 Asham'd to let the *Greeks* around behold  
 'The tears, that misbecame their general's cheek.

Then

Then cease to blame what rather merits pity,  
I might add praise.---He, who the father's heart  
More tender has than mine, too tender has it.  
I love my children as a father should ;  
Besides, I love them from a softer cause,  
I love my *Clytemnestra*.

*Cly.* Had, alas !

Had *Agamemnon* lov'd me, would he, nay,  
Could he have left me in the rage of grief,  
My daughter yet fresh bleeding in my sight ?  
Left me so long ? love surely must have found,  
In the wide round of ten revolving years,  
Some way to see me, to prevent these sorrows---  
Why was I thus abandon'd, *Agamemnon* ?

*Ag.* Let me kiss off these tears. O beauteous tears !  
If shed by doubting love, if shed for absence.  
Instead of these reproaches, ask me rather,  
How I that absence bore : and here all words  
All eloquence is dumb, to speak the pangs,  
That lurk'd beneath the rugged brow of war.  
When glaring day was clos'd, and hush'd the camp,  
Oh ! then, amid ten thousand other cares,  
Those stung the keenest that remember'd thee,  
That on my long-Left *Clytemnestra* thought,  
On what wild seas and mountains lay between us.

*Cly.* Unhappy man !

*Ag.* What says my *Clytemnestra* ?

*Cly.* Unhappy mortals ! by vain words deceiv'd,  
To their own pride, to joyless honour slaves.

*Ag.* He, he, alone, can claim a right to bliss,  
Who has fulfill'd the painful task of honour.

*Cly.* But what avails a right to vanish'd bliss ?

*Ag.* Let me once more adjure thee, *Clytemnestra*,  
By every tender name of love adjure thee,  
To lose in kind oblivion these our past---  
I would not call them quarrels---Ah ! there was,



There was a time---I will indulge the thought---  
 When everlasting transport turn'd our souls :  
 When join'd to vernal life, the spring of love  
 Around us gayly blow'd ! and heaven and earth,  
 All smiling nature look'd delighted on.  
 Yet, would my *Clytemnestra* lend her aid,  
 I know a passion still more deeply charming  
 Than fever'd youth e'er felt ; and that is love,  
 By long experience mellow'd into friendship.  
 How far beyond that froward child of fancy !  
 With beauty pleas'd a while, anon disgusted,  
 Seeking some other toy ; how far more noble  
 Is this bright offspring of unchanging reason,  
 That fonder grows with age and charms for ever !

It is not often, *Clytemnestra*, thus,  
 That I submit to double my intreaties ;  
 But, oh destroy not the collected hopes  
 Of life and love ! Oh make not conquest hateful !  
 I shall abhor it, if it cost me thee,  
 Cost me thy love. A daughter was too much,  
 And ten years absence from my *Clytemnestra*.  
 Add not to these a loss I cannot bear,  
 The loss of thee, thou loveliest of thy sex !  
 And once the kindest !

*Cly.*

Oh !

*Aga.*

Turn not away ;

There is relenting goodness in thy look.

*Cly.* Alas ! untimely fondness---*Agamemnon* !  
 Too generous *Agamemnon* ! you distress me.  
 Would you were not so kind, so tender, now !  
 Or ne'er had been so cruel !

*Aga.*

'Tis unjust

To call me cruel. Fate, the Gods, our fortune  
 Were cruel to us both---What could I more  
 To sooth our parting woes, and ease my absence ?  
 I left you *Melissander* to advise you,

Left



Left you the wisest, faithfullest and best---  
Oh whisp'ring nature ! Are not these my children ?

SCENE III.

AGAMEMNON, CLYTEMNESTRA, ELECTRA,  
ORESTES.

*Aga.* My daughter, my *Electra* !

*Elec.* O my father !

*Aga.* Come to my arms, my boy ! my dear *Orestes* !  
In whom I live anew, my younger self !  
And thou, *Electra* ; in thy opening cheek  
I mark thy mother's bloom : even so she look'd,  
Such the mild light with which her beauty dawn'd.  
Oh thou soft image of my *Clytemnestra* !  
My other *Iphigenia* !

*Elec.* Oh my father !

My joy ! my pride ! my glory ! whom in dreams,  
I oft have seen, as if return'd from *Troy* ;  
But still unwelcome morning, with a tear,  
Wip'd out the dear illusion of the night.  
And is it then no more a faithless vision ?  
Oh 'tis my father ! whose departure hence,  
And *Iphigenia*'s death I just remember.  
How glorious *Iphigenia*, was thy death !  
A death I envy rather than lament.  
Who would not die to gain immortal fame,  
Deliver *Greece*, and crown a father's glory ?  
*Aga.* Come to my arms again, my generous  
daughter !

And thou my son ! O that thy tender years  
Had suffer'd thee to share our toils at *Troy* !  
'Tis war that forms the prince : 'tis hardship, toil ;  
'Tis sleepless nights, and never-resting days ;  
'Tis pain, 'tis danger, 'tis affronted death ;  
'Tis

'Tis equal fate for all, and changing fortune ;  
 That rear the mind to glory, that inspire  
 The noblest virtues and the gentlest manners.  
 Where shall I find, to teach thee these, *Orestes*,  
 Another *Troy* ?

*Orestes.* How happy had I been !  
 To have beheld what I must only hear !  
 But I will hear it often, every day ;  
 Will learn your story, study your example ;  
 Will try to mix your virtues with your blood,  
 And not disgrace the laurels I inherit.  
 My bosom flutters with I know not what---  
 ---Forgive me, Sir, I am too young to say it---  
 But something here I feel, which bids me hope  
 That I shall not betray my father's honour.

*Aga.* Son of my soul !---Look here, my *Clytem-  
 nestra* !

Look here and weep with tendernefs and transport !  
 What is all tasteless luxury to this ?  
 To these best joys, which holy love bestows ?  
 O nature ! parent nature ! thou, alone,  
 Art the true judge of what can make us happy !

*Enter an officer belonging to the court.*

*Officer.* *Egisthus*, Sir, attends.

*Aga.* Go, bid him enter.

Retire, my *Clytemnestra*, my dear children :  
 We soon shall meet again, 'till then farewell.

## SCENE IV.

### AGAMEMNON.

Obey me, features, for one supple moment :  
 You shall not long be tortur'd. Here, in courts,  
 We must not wear the soldier's honest face.  
 He little thinks I have him in the snare

Of

Of *Melifander*, whom, in my return,  
I from that desert island chanc'd to save,  
To which the rufian---

SCENE V.

AGAMEMNON, EGISTHUS.

*Egist.* Health to *Agamemnon* !  
And happiness responsive to his glory !  
*Aga.* Cousin, I greet you well.  
*Egist.* Forgive me, Sir.  
You have surpriz'd us with this quick return :  
For by that signal, whose illustrious flame  
Rejoic'd all *Greece*, we did not hope your presence  
These three days hence. Forgive, that, unprepar'd,  
We only with that joy, that transport, wonder,  
Which swell each *Grecian* bosom, thus receive you.  
And truly such a burst I have not seen  
Of that best triumph. City, Coantry, all,  
Is in a gay triumphant tempest tost.  
I scarce could press along. The trumpet's voice  
Is lost in loud repeated shouts that raise  
Your name to heaven. Ten thousand eyes, below,  
Ake to behold the conqueror of *Troy*.

*Aga.* The noblest praise that can salute my ear,  
The sweetest musc, is my people's joy.  
But sure your tongue has done it ample justice ;  
Trust me, you blazon a description well.  
I have not heard so much obliging speech  
These many years.

*Egist.* Misconstrue not my zeal :  
On the full heart obedient language waits.  
I feel so deep your glory, *Agamemnon*,  
As mingles with my joy a sort of passion,  
That almost touches envy. O ye gods !

Has.

Has, while I liv'd, a war, the most renown'd  
Which any age e'er saw, or shall again  
Be seen ; a war, whose never-dying fame  
Will cover earth, and reach remotest time,  
Has such a war adorn'd my days, and I  
Not shar'd its glory ? Pining here, unknown,  
In nameless peace---how have I lost my life !

*Aga.* This ardor is the mode. But know, *Egisthus*,  
That ruling a free people well in peace,  
Without or yielding or usurping power ;  
Maintaining firm the honour of the laws,  
Yet sometimes softening their too rigid doom,  
As mercy may require ; steering the state,  
Thro factious storms, or the more dangerous calms  
Of peace, by long continuance grown corrupt ;  
Besides the fair career which fortune opens  
To the mild glories of protected arts,  
To bounty, to beneficence, to deeds  
That give the gods themselves their brightest beams:  
Yes, know, that these are, in true glory equal,  
If not superior, to deluding conquest :  
Nor less demand they conduct, courage, care,  
And persevering toil.

*Egist.* Say thankless toil,  
Harsh and unpleasing ; that instead of praise  
And due reward, meets oftner scorn, reproach,  
Fierce opposition to the clearest measures ;  
Injustice, banishment, or death itself :  
Such is the nature of malignant man.  
Not so the victor's meed : Him all approve,  
Him all admire.

*Aga.* Yet tho a tedious task,  
Tho an ungrateful labour oft to rule ;  
I not so hardly of mankind, *Egisthus*,  
Presume to judge. Truth, wisdom, courage, justice,  
Beneficence, and for the public good

A con-



A constant tenor of well-laid designs,  
Must still be awful in the worst of times,  
Be amiable, dear ; while worth, at last  
Will light up worth, and virtue kindle virtue.  
You was however eas'd of half the toil,  
By him I left to counsel *Clytemnestra*,  
By *Melissander*.

*Egist.* Would to heaven I had !

*Aga.* You much amaze me---Is not *Melissander*  
Wife, just and faithful ?

*Egist.* Sir, I must confess  
He wore a specious mask---

*Aga.* Beware, *Egistus* ;  
I know his stedfast worth, and will not bear  
The farthest hint that stains the man I love.

*Egist.* Then urg'd by truth and in my own defence,

I boldly will assert him, *Agamemnon*,  
To be more apt to trouble and embroil,  
Than serve a state. A certain stubborn virtue,  
I would say affectation of blunt virtue,  
Beneath whose outside froth, fermenting lay  
Pride, envy, faction, turbulence of soul,  
And democratic views, in some sort made him  
A secret traitor, equally unfit  
Or to obey or rule. But that I check'd  
His early treasons, here at your return,  
You might have found your kingdom a republic.

*Aga.* O I shall lose all patience!-- (*Aside*,  
You do well,

To give your accusation open speech.  
Meantime, remember you must fully prove it,  
You must!---And he who *Melissander* proves  
The wretch you have describ'd proves man is vain,  
And saps the broad foundations of all trust.  
I know he would not patiently look on,

And



And suffer ill designs to gather strength,  
Awaiting gentle seasons ; yes, I know  
He had a troublesome old-fashion'd way  
Of shocking courtly ears with horrid truth.  
He was no civil ruffian : none of those,  
Who lye with twitted looks, betray with shrugs---  
I wax too warm---But he was none of those,  
Is none of those dust-licking, reptile, close,  
Insinuating, speckled, smooth court-serpents,  
That make it so unsafe, chiefly for kings,  
To walk this weedy world---Pardon my heat---  
I wander from the purpose---You *Egisthus*,  
Must prove your charge, to *Melisander's* face,  
Must prove it.

*Egft.* Surely---Since the princely faith  
Of your own blood you doubt---

*Ag.* Friendship and truth  
Are more a-kin to me than blood.

*Egipſ.* You ſhall,  
You ſhall have proof; but to his face you cannot.

*Aga.* But to his face I will---I cannot! why?

*Esf.* He wanders far from hence, I know not where :

For when I found him an undoubted traitor,  
Tho' he the heaviest punishment deserv'd ;  
Yet in regard to that esteem, which, once,  
You deign'd to bear him, banishment alone  
Was all I did inflict.

*Aga.* I thank you, fir---  
O you are wondrous good!---But tell me, how,  
How durst you meddle in the sphere assign'd  
To *Clytemnestra*? He was left to her;  
To be her counsellor I left my friend,  
Left *Melissander*; left a man, whom long,  
Whom well I knew; perhaps, to check you, left him:  
And you pretend, you!--- But I will be calm---

These

These passions in a king to his inferiors,  
 Who cannot answer equal, are not comely.  
 Forgive my transport -- A more quiet hour  
 Shall sift this matter to the bottom, shall  
 Do *Melissander* or *Egijbus* justice.

## S C E N E VI.

E G I S T H U S.

Now go thy way, weak open hearted man,  
 Thus to declare the ruin thou intendest.  
 Go, rate thy *Trojan* slaves; and elsewhere practise  
 This insolence of camps. Tame, as I seem,  
 Submissive, mild, and patient of thy threats;  
 Yet ere to-morrow's sun beholds *Mycenæ*,  
 My sure-aim'd blow shall pierce thy swelling heart,  
 And cool this tyrant fever in thy veins.  
 Were not our blood, our kindred blood at variance,  
 And therefore burning with immortal hate;  
 Had not thy father *Atreus*, at a banquet,  
 A dreadful banquet! from whose sight the sun  
 Turn'd back eclips'd, serv'd--Monstrous!--up to mine,  
 To his own brother, to the pale *Thyestes*,  
 His murder'd sons: didst thou not wear a crown  
 Then by thy father ravish'd from our line,  
*Mycenæ's* crown, which he unjustly seiz'd,  
 And added to his own, to that of *Argos*:  
 Had I not stain'd thy bed with *Clytemnestra*:  
 Tho safety did not urge, and self-defence:  
 Yet this vile treatment, treatment fit for slaves;  
 Thanks to thy fury! this has fix'd thy doom.  
 Some foolish scruples, that still hung about me,  
 Are by this friendly, tempest blown away.---

But *Clytemnestra* comes. How shall I calm  
 Her troubled mind? How bring her to my purpose?

S C E N E

## SCENE VII.

CLYTEMNESTRA, EGISTHUS.

*Cly.* Here let me kneel, *Egisthus*, grasp thy knees,  
Here let me grow till my request be granted.  
Now is the very crisis of my fate.

*Egist.* What fight is this I see? Rise, *Clytemnestra*!  
Thou fairest, most majestic of thy sex!  
It misbecomes thee much this suppliant posture.  
O there is nothing, nothing, sure, which you  
Need stoop to ask! speak, and command it, madam.

*Cly.* Then let us henceforth be, as if this love  
Had never been betwixt us.

*Egist.* Cease to love thee!  
What wild demand! Impossible!---Even now,  
Endear'd by danger, by distress endear'd,  
I for thee feel a fonder pang than e'er  
I felt before.

*Cly.* No! these deluding words  
Can charm no longer; their enchantment flies;  
And in my breast the guilty passions jar  
Unkind, unjoyous, unharmonious all.  
Ah me! from real happiness we stray,  
By vice bewilder'd; vice, which always leads,  
However fair at first, to wilds of woe.

*Egist.* Ah! *Clytemnestra*! didst thou love---

*Cly.* No more!  
Seduce my soul no more! Here will I stop---  
Beyond this line 'tis misery, 'tis madness,  
The furies flash their torches, vultures tear,  
The mingled tortures of the damn'd await me.  
Oh! if your passion be not merely selfish,  
If the least tenderness for me you feel,  
Drive me no farther down the gulph of woe!

To happiness I bid a last farewell !  
 I ask not happiness : no, that I leave  
 To innocence and virtue ; peace, alone,  
 Some poor remains of peace is all I ask,  
 Not to be greatly wretched, plung'd in horrors !  
 And yet, who knows, the heavenly spark, that sleeps  
 Beneath these embers, yet may spread anew  
 Its cheerful lustre---All may yet be well---  
 For *Agamemnon* was so kind, so gentle,  
 With such a holy tender flame he burn'd,  
 As might have kindled in a barbarous breast  
 Humanity and virtue.

*Egist.*

All pretence.

I guess his aim ! I penetrate his purpose.  
 On you he lavish'd fondness, while on me  
 He low'd destruction. Doubtless, with his ear,  
 Some villain has been busy ; and he means  
 First to divide us, then with greater ease,  
 To ruin both---And can you then be caught,  
 Caught with the common prostituted speeches,  
 That oft have sicken'd on the glowing lip  
 Of many a *Trojan* slave ? *Chryseis* had them ;  
*Briseis* too : and now *Cassandra*, she,  
 Who, more like a triumphant queen than captive,  
 Is every hour expected---

*Cly.*

What *Cassandra* ?

*Egist.* O it imports you little what *Cassandra* !  
 Thus poorly tame you ne'er will want *Cassandras*.  
 What is become of *Clytemnestra's* spirit,  
 That she can thus forget her high descent,  
 Forget her rank, her honour, nay forget  
 Her injuries ?

*Cly.*

But what *Cassandra*, say ?

*Egist.* Why *Priam's* daughter, the prophetic princess,  
 The proud, the young, the beautiful *Cassandra* ,  
 So vain of heart, she dreamt *Apollo* lov'd her,

And



And on her plighted faith to crown his love  
 Bestow'd the gift of prophecy ; the gift  
 In her possession, she deceiv'd the god ;  
 Whence he, provok'd, with this condition dash'd it,  
 Of never gaining credit. So the tale,  
 The fable runs---Yet on my soul, I think,  
 Did she give out, she will be queen of *Argos*,  
 She were indeed a prophetess.

*Cly.*

'Tis well.

You mean it for an insult this, you do.  
 What else could tempt you to deride me, sir,  
 With such extravagance ?

*Egist.*

Mistake me not,

I mean it, madam, for a serious truth,  
 I mean it for a certainty, if thus  
 You droop, unnerv'd with these dejecting fears.

*Cly. Cassandra queen of Argos !*

*Egist.*

Yes, of *Argos* ;

While *Clytemnestra* in a prison pines ;  
 Where she may weep, and moralize at leisure.

*Cly.* By heavens ! she visits first her father's shade,

*Egist.* There shone your native self. Let bright  
 revenge,

I should say justice, dissipate these clouds,  
 These melancholy whims of ill-judg'd virtue,  
 And shew you burning with your former lustre.  
 Madam, our fates are blended : know, we stand  
 Or fall together. Shame, contempt, and ruin,  
 Or safety, love, and glory, is our choice.  
 And can we doubt a moment ?

*Cly.*

But *Egisthus*---

*Egist.* I know the purpose of thy pleading eye.  
 Of that hereafter---We shall meet again---  
 My presence now is wanted in the city.  
 Fear nothing---Thou shalt know before we act,  
 Thou, for whose sake alone I act and live !

*The End of the Second Act.*

A C T



## ACT III. SCENE I.

ARCAS, MELISANDER.

ARCAS.

AND have I found my long-lost friend again?  
My *Melisander*! But so chang'd your look,  
So sickly'd with a kind of thoughtful sadness,  
So sunk each feature, by seven drooping years  
Spent in that desert isle, as baffled quite  
My wandering recollection.

*Mel.*True, dear *Arcas*:

For what a helpless creature, by himself,  
Is the proud lord of this inferior world,  
Vain feeble man! the commoners of nature,  
Each wing that flits along the spacious sky,  
Is less dependant than their boasting master.

Hail social life! into thy pleasing bounds,  
Again I come, to pay the common stock  
My share of service; and, in glad return,  
To taste thy comforts, thy protected joys.

*Arc.* O greatly welcome! you deserve them well,  
You well deserve the social life you polish.  
Still on my thought your strange delivery dwells.  
By *Agamemnon* left to aid the queen,  
With faithful counsel, while he warr'd at *Troy*;  
And thus by *Agamemnon* to be sav'd,  
Returning from that conquest! wondrous chance!  
Or rather wondrous conduct of the gods!  
By mortals, from their blindness, chance misnam'd.  
Mean time, instruct me, while the king repotes,  
How was you snatch'd away? and how, so long,  
Could you this dreadful solitude support?  
I burn to know the whole.

*Mel.*

*Mel.*

'Tis thus, my friend.

While sunk in unsuspecting sleep I lay,  
 Some midnight ruffians rush'd into my chamber,  
 Sent by *Egisthus*, who my presence deem'd  
 Obstructive (so I solve it) to his views;  
 Black views I fear, as you perhaps may know.  
 Sudden they seiz'd, and muffled up in darkness,  
 Strait bore me to the sea, whose instant prey  
 I did conclude myself, when first, around  
 The ship unmoor'd, I heard the chiding wave.  
 But these fell tools of cruel power, it seems,  
 Had orders in a desert isle to leave me;  
 There hopeless, helpless, comfortless, to prove  
 The utmost gail and bitterness of death.  
 Thus malice often overshoots itself,  
 And some unguarded accident betrays  
 The man of blood.---Next night---a dreary night!  
 Cast on the wildest of the *Cyclad isles*,  
 Where never human foot had mark'd the shore,  
 These ruffians left me---Yet believe me, *Arcas*,  
 Such is the rooted love we bear mankind,  
 All ruffians as they were, I never heard  
 A sound so dismal as their parting oars.---  
 Then horrid silence follow'd, broke alone  
 By the low murmurs of the restless deep,  
 Mixt with the doubtful breeze, that now and then  
 Sigh'd thro the mournful woods. Beneath a shade  
 I sat me down, more heavily oppress'd,  
 More desolate at heart, than e'er I felt  
 Before. When *Philomela*, o'er my head,  
 Began to tune her melancholy strain,  
 As piteous of my woes; till by degrees,  
 Composing sleep on wounded nature shed  
 A kind but short relief. At early morn,  
 Wak'd by the chaunt of birds, I look'd around  
 For usual objects: Objects found I none,

Except

Except before me stretch'd the tiling main,  
And rocks and woods, in savage view, behind.  
Wrapt for a moment in amaz'd confusion,  
My thought turn'd giddy round ; when, all at once,  
To memory full my dire condition rush'd.

*Arc.* But of each comfort, each convenience void,  
How could you life sustain ? how fence against  
Inclement skies ?

*Mel.* A mossy cave, that fac'd  
The southern sea, and in whose deep recess  
Boil'd up a crystal fountain, was my home.  
Herbs were my food, those blessed stores of health !  
Only when winter, from my daily search,  
Withdrew my verdant meal, I was oblig'd  
In faithless snares to seize, which truly griev'd me,  
My sylvan friends ; that ne'er till then had known,  
And therefore dreaded less the tyrant man.

But these low hardships scarce deserve regard :  
The pangs, that sharpest stung, were in my mind ;  
There desolation reign'd ; and there cut off  
From social life, I felt a constant death.  
And yet these pangs at last forgot to throb :  
What cannot lenient gentle time perform ?  
I eat my lonely meal without a tear ;  
Nor sigh'd to see the dreadful night descend.  
In my own breast, a world within myself,  
In streams, in groves, in sunny hill and shade ;  
In all that blooms with vegetable life,  
Or joys with kindred animal sensation ;  
In the full-peopled round of azure heaven ;  
Whene'er I, studious, look'd, I found companions.  
But, chief, the muses lent their softning aid.  
At their enchanting voice my sorrows fled,  
Or learn'd to please ; while, thro my troubled heart,  
They breath'd the soul of harmony anew.  
Thus of the great community of nature

A denizen

A denizen I liv'd ; and oft, in hymns,  
And rapturous thought, even with the gods convers'd,  
That not disdain sometimes the walks of man.

So pass'd the time, when, lo ! within my call,  
Arriv'd the ship, which hope had often promis'd---  
The ship ! ---O it surpass'd my fondest dream,  
E'er to imagine the gay ship that came !  
As on the deck I *Agamemnon* saw,  
All glorious with the spoils of conquer'd *Troy* ;  
Ye gods ? what transport, what amazement seiz'd me !  
What adoration of your wondrous ways !  
Expression sinks beneath them.

*Arc.* Sweet reward  
Of manly patience ! that, to fortune still  
Superior, scorns despair.

*Mel.* This theme, my friend,  
Will better suit a leisure hour ; but now  
The high concerns of life demand our care.

I have already to the king imparted  
Suspensions of *Egisthus*, and remain  
In this disguise, not to alarm his guilt,  
Till it more full appear, and proper steps  
To punish his misgovernment be taken.  
If he has ill designs, you, *Arcas*, you  
Must, while you seem'd regardless, have discern'd them.  
Your calm but keen inspection, not disturb'd  
By the vain flutter of ill-tim'd discourse,  
Must reach the very bottom of his purpose.  
In you the king confides, of you demands,  
As of his best-lov'd subject in *Mykene*,  
The truth.

*Arc.* O, I have precious truths in store !  
And that best treasure will unlock before him.  
Long has my silent observation trac'd  
*Egisthus*, thro' the doubling maze of treason ;  
But now his ill designs are too too plain,



To all *Mycenæ* plain; and who, indeed,  
Who can have good ones, that corrupts a people?

It was, however, hard, a bitter task!  
To wink at public villainy; to wipe  
Each honest passion from my livid face,  
To bind my hands, and seal my quivering lips,  
While my heart burn'd with rage, and treasur'd up  
A storm of indignation---

*Mel.*

Give it way!

O 'tis a glorious luxury! Opprest,  
For years, beneath a load of wicked power,  
To heave it off indignant, and assert  
The dear dear freedom of a virtuous mind.  
Curse on the coward or perfidious tongue,  
That dares not, even to kings, avow the truth!  
Let traitors wrap them in delusive incense,  
On flattery flattery heap, on falshood falshood:  
Truth is the living liberal breath of heaven;  
That sweeps these fogs away, with all their vermin.  
And, on my soul, I think that *Agamemnon*  
Deserves some touch of blame. To put the power,  
The power of blessing or oppressing *millions*,  
Of doing or great good or equal mischief,  
Even into doubtful hands, is worse than careless.  
Ye gods, avert the miseries that hence  
On him and on his family may fall!  
But, see, the king

S C E N E II.

AGAMEMNON, MELISANDER, ARCAS.

*Aga.* Nay, *Arcas* to my bosom, (*Arcas kneeling.*)  
Come, let me proudly take a faithful heart!

*Ar.* Thrice welcome, sir, to *Argos* and *Mycenæ*!  
To virtue welcome!

VOL. II.

F

*Aga.*



*Aga.* In my own dominions  
 I am a stranger, *Arcas*. Ten full years,  
 Or even one day, is absence for a king,  
 Without some mighty reason, much too long.  
 For me a just and memorable war,  
 Whose actions future times perhaps may sing.  
 My own, my brother's, and my people's honour,  
 With that of common *Greece*, must plead my pardon.  
 Now shall my cares attend the works of peace :  
 Calm deeds that glare not on the vulgar eye ;  
 And yet it equal courage oft demands,  
 To quell injustice, riot, factious rage,  
 Dark-working blind cabal and bold disorder,  
 As to confront the rigid face of war.  
 Then tell me, *Arcas*, for, till self-inform'd,  
 I mean to see with your discerning eyes,  
 And sure I am they never will mislead me.  
 Have I much subject for this peaceful courage ?  
 This fortitude of state ?

*Ar.* Too much my lord.  
 Would to the gods, our virtues, here at home,  
 Could answer your heroic deeds abroad !  
 You, doubtless from the rugged school of war,  
 Have brought sound manly hearts, and generous spirits ;  
 While we, alas ! we rot in weedy peace,  
 In slothful riot, luxury, profusion,  
 And every meanness to repair that waste---  
 I see the noble blood, indignant, mount,  
 At this relation to my sovereign's cheek :  
 But as affairs now press, I were a traitor,  
 If with a sparing tongue I spoke the truth.

*Aga.* Immortal gods ! have I, this ten long years,  
 Sustain'd a war at *Troy* ; fill'd every day  
 With cares incessant, councils, dangers, toils,  
 To cherish villains in licentious ease ?  
 Have I thus squander'd vile, on *Phrygian* plains,

The

The bravest blood of *Greece* to shelter such ;  
And to assert their honour who have none ?  
But what can this perfidious, this *Egisbus*,  
What can he, say, by such loose rule propose ?  
Is it his native bent ? Or does he push  
Some dark design, by these detested means ?

*Ar.* There is no vice a stranger to his heart,  
Conceal'd beneath refin'd dissimulation ;  
Dissimulation, that on you your self  
Impos'd. Meantime, sir, his outrageous views  
Invade the throne of *Argos* and *Mycenæ*.

*Aga.* Said you the throne of *Argos* and *Mycenæ* ?  
Already have I lost my noblest throne,  
If he has robb'd me of my people's virtue ;  
'Tis but vain pomp, a tyrant's toy, the other.  
And dares he bear a giddy look so high,  
As to my throne ? The villain ! sure he dares not.

*Ar.* Nay, more, my lord---He scales the dazzling  
height,

And almost grasps with impious hands your sceptre,

*Aga.* To touch it is perdition !---What ! *Egisbus* !  
*Egisbus* seize my throne !

*Ar.* So means the traitor.

*Aga.* That creature of my power ! that insect ! rais'd  
By the warm beams of my mistaken bounty !

Whom, when my father's vengeance raz'd his race,  
I sav'd, train'd up, with favours, honours heap'd ;

And trusted in his hands at last a jewel,  
Too precious for the faithless heart of man---

O gross gross blindness !---Half my kingly pow'r !

Ay, there breaks out his father's treacherous blood ?

There, there, too late, I find the base *Thyestes* !

Forgive me, *Atræus* ! Oh my royal father !

Forgive my trusting thus the seed of him,

Of an abhor'd, an execrable brother,

Who even profan'd thy bed---But, ere yon orb

Shall from the purpled ocean rise again,  
 Oh injur'd *Atreus*! by thy sacred shade  
 I swear, to make for this a full atonement.

Is then this people, *Arcas*, grown so vile,  
 So very vile, that he dares entertain  
 The smallest hope to rival me in empire?  
 I like not vaunting---But, ungrateful people!  
 Can you prefer a nameless thing to me?  
 Am I not rough with scars on your account?  
 And for the careful love I always bore you,  
 Your father nam'd? And yet prefer to me,  
 One who ne'er saw the glorious front of war,  
 For nothing famous but corrupting peace,  
 And whose sole merit was my ill-judg'd favour.  
 Can you?---away!---Dishonour stains the thought!  
 How should this be?

*Ar.* Not many, sir, stand fix'd  
 On the deep principles of reason'd virtue,  
 Whom time nor steals, nor passion bears away.  
 Mankind, in general float along the stream  
 Of custom, good or bad; and oft the mind  
 To that familiar grows, by gradual use  
 And still-increasing vice, whose first regard  
 Gave horror. Hence ten loosely-govern'd years  
 Have wrought such strange events, that you no more  
 Behold your antient *Argos* and *Mycenæ*.  
 These cities now with slaves and villains swarm.  
 At first *Egeus*, popular and fair,  
 All smiles and softness, as if each man's friend,  
 By hidden ways proceeded, mining virtue:  
 He pride, he pomp, he luxury diffus'd;  
 He taught them wants, beyond their private means;  
 And strait, in bounty's pleasing chains involv'd,  
 They grew his slaves. Who cannot live on little,  
 Or as his various fortune shall permit,  
 Stands on the market ready to be sold.

*Aga.* O damn'd detested traffick !---But proceed.

*Ar.* While the luxurious fever thus increas'd,  
Still, in proportion as it gather'd rage,  
He lent it fewel ; and, more bold, disclos'd  
His noon-day treason. Murmurs went about,  
And spread at last into the common talk,  
That you was proud, severe, beneath the notion  
Of holding firm the helm of state, a tyrant ;  
That in vain wars, which nought imported them,  
You spent their treasure, shed their noblest blood ;  
And that, *Troy* conquer'd once, to her rich plains  
You meant from *Argos* to transplant your empire.

Mean time, in private, all, whom wild debauch  
Has set a drift from every human tie ;  
Whom riot, want, and conscious guilt inflame,  
Holding the gods and virtue in contempt,  
Amidst their bowls ; such are his bosom-friends :  
And join'd to them, a meaner ruffian band,  
Of villains bold in crimes, whose trade is murder,  
Hang in black clouds around him ; whence, I fear,  
A sudden tempest is prepar'd to burst.

This, sir, from duty and a faithful zeal,  
I plain unfold : nor on my word, alone,  
Believe these accusations ; clear as day,  
I for them will produce the strongest proof.

*Aga.* I thank thee, *Arcas*. Truth, tho sometimes clad  
In painful lustre, yet is always welcome,  
Dear as the light, that shews the lurking rock :  
'Tis the fair star that, ne'er into the main  
Descending, leads us safe thro stormy life---  
Gods ! how it tears me from each calmer thought !  
To think this traitor, that this double traitor,  
This traitor to myself and to my people,  
Should by such sneaking, such unmanly ways,  
Thus filch away my crown !---  
Why stand I chafing here ? One timely deed



Is worth tenthousand words--Come then, my friends,  
Come and behold me seize amidst his guards,  
His coward guards---Guilt ever was a coward---  
This rival-king, and with him crown my triumph.  
Till then *Troy* smoaks in vain, and *Agamemnon*  
Cannot be said to conquer.

*Mel.*

Sir, beware---

*Aga.* Of what beware? Where am I, *Melifander*?  
Am I not in *Mycenæ*? in my palace?  
Are not these crouds, that stream along the streets,  
My subjects all? Of what should I beware?  
Not seize a traitor in my own dominions?  
Yes I will seize him, *Melifander*,---will!

*Mel.* What grace to kings such generous ardour  
gives!

But tho brave deeds be warm at first conceiv'd,  
Let the best purpose cool, nor miss your blow.  
More firm and sure the hand of courage strikes,  
When it obeys the watchful eye of caution.  
You hear from *Arcas*, sir, what ruffian bands,  
What secret deaths, what daggers lurk around him;  
Be cautious then; for virtue's, glory's sake!  
And, when you strike, strike home.

*Aga.*

O for those *Greeks*!

That this rude day are tossing on the seas;  
Those hardy *Greeks*, whom ten years war has steel'd  
With toils, with dangers, and with death familiar:  
Then should you see what chaff before the wind  
Are these weak sons of soft enfeebling peace,  
These wretches, only bold where unresist'd.

*Mel.* But since, my lord, you cannot now exert  
This nobler force, let prudence take its place.  
Have patience, only; till you safely can,  
And surely, seize him.

*Aga.*

Well, till then I will.

And, tho not made of patient mold, in this

I will



I will have patience, will, some tedious hours,  
Reprefs my vengeance ----- (pausing.)

Yes, I like the thought---

He may be seiz'd this evening at the banquet,  
Be there surpriz'd with ease---and shall!---  
For by th' eternal gods that rule mankind!  
The sleep of death alone shall seal these eyes,  
While such a wretch holds power in my dominions.

Oh *Clytemnestra*! to the public, now,  
Succeeds the private pang---At thought of thee,  
New rage, new vengeance shake my inmost soul!  
Was my belov'd, my queen, my *Clytemnestra*,  
So long abandon'd in a villain's power,  
Who knows, it seems, no limits, owns no laws,  
Save those one vice imposes on another?  
And now the secret cause, I fear, is plain,  
Of that unusual damp, that strange dejection,  
Which clouded her at meeting. Still the more  
I pour'd my fondness, still the more distress'd  
She seem'd; and, turning from my tender gaze,  
The copious shower stole down her troubled cheek;  
As if she pity'd those my blind endearments,  
And in her breast some horrid secret swell'd---  
Should it be so---Confusion!---Can I stoop  
Even to suppose it!---How from slight mistakes  
Great evils spring! But the most fruitful source  
Of every evil---O that I, in thunder,  
Could sound it o'er the listning earth to kings---  
Is delegating power to wicked hands.

*Mel.* My lord, let no suspicions of the queen  
E'er taint your bosom: if I judge aright---

*Ag.* No, *Melissander*, no; I am not jealous;  
In me that passion and contempt were one;  
No, 'tis her situation gives me horror,  
Her dreadful situation!---But of this  
Enough---Then tell me *Arcas*, tell me truly;

Are there a few, say, do there yet remain  
 A faithful few ! to save the sinking state ?  
 Can you, ere night, collect an honest band,  
 A band of such as worthy are to rescue  
 Their king and country from impending fate ?  
 Ah ! little thought I, that amidst my subjects,  
 Embosom'd sweet in peace, I, like a tyrant,  
 Should e'er have needed guards.

*Arc.*

Yes, sir, I know

A band of generous youths, whom native virtue,  
 Unbroken yet by avarice or profusion,  
 Fits for our purpose : These I can collect---

*Aga.* About it quickly *Arcas* ; lose no time :  
 Go, bring me to the banquet those brave youths :  
 I long for their acquaintance. Till that hour,  
 Domestic cares and joys demand my presence :  
 The father's heart now bears me to my children.  
 Farewel ! My all depends upon your conduct.

*The End of the Third Act.*

A C T

ACT IV. SCENE I.

AGAMEMNON, MELISANDER.

AGAMEMNON.

**D**omestic pleasures spread their charms in vain--  
O for the hour of vengeance ! I, till then,  
But stalk about, the shadow of a king.  
Heard you from *Arcas* aught ?

*Mel.* Be patient, sir :  
As yet the time permits not his return.  
*Arcas* is zealous, ardent in your service,  
And will not fail his duty.

*Enter an Officer belonging to the court.*

*Offic.* Sir, *Cassandra*  
Is just arriv'd.

*Aga.* Conduct the princess hither.  
This *Priam*'s fairest daughter, *Melijander*,  
Is a young princess of engaging beauty,  
Rais'd by distress, of noble sense and spirit ;  
But, by poetic visions led astray,  
She dreamt *Apello* lov'd her, and the gift  
Of prophecy bestow'd, to gain her promise :  
The gift once her's, the chaste-faithless maid  
Deceiv'd the god ; who therefore, in revenge,  
Since he could not recall it, made it useless,  
For ever doom'd to meet with disregard.  
E'er-since the lovely visionary raves  
With dignity ; foretels the fate of nations ;  
And, judging of the future from the past  
Has oft been wondrous happy in her guesses.  
Some strange, some recent instances of this,  
Confirm her in her venerable madness.

*Mel.* Be not too rash in judging, *Agamemnon* ;  
For we, blind mortals, but a little know

Of boundless nature---Hark the princess comes :  
I hear her voice, I hear the voice of sorrow.

## S C E N E II.

AGAMEMNON, MELISANDER, CASSANDRA  
*attended by Trojan captives.*

CASSANDRA, *entering.*

O hostile roofs ! O *Ilium*, O my country !

*Aga.* I cannot blame your grief, unhappy princess !  
But, if it can relieve you, here be sure  
Of an asylum, safe as *Priam's* palace.

*Cass.* O sweet abode ! O palace of my fathers !  
My bleeding heart melts while I think of thee ;  
Think of the days of innocence and joy,  
That shone upon me there. How charg'd art thou !  
Ah ! what a scene, when I beheld thee last !  
Rage, blood, and flames, and shrieks of murder round  
me !

The sword of *Pyrrhus*, and a feeble father !  
Where was you *Hector* then ? Where all his sons ?  
O *Priam's* numerous race ! what are you now  
Become ? Ah me ! the desolating gods  
Have laid their hands, their iron hands upon us.

*Aga.* From past misfortunes, princess, turn your eye.

*Cass.* 'Tis true, the future may still well suffice.  
Th' avenging sisters trace my footsteps still,  
The hunters still pursue the trembling doe.  
Where am I ?---Gods !--Black heavy drops of blood  
Run down the guilty walls---With the dun shades  
Of night ascending, lo ! successive troops  
Of *Trojan* ghosts are flocking to the banquet :  
Permitted by th' infernal gods, they come,  
To feast them with the horrors of this night,  
To snuff the blood of victims---Ha ! the car,

The

The gay triumphal car, is turn'd, at once,  
 Into a mournful bier, that nods along,  
 Solemn and flow---Yes, *Troy* shall be aveng'd ;  
 I shall the vengence see ; and yet not see  
 Thy light, returning *Phæbus*.

*Aga.*

Fair *Cassandra*,

Indulge no more these melancholy views,  
 These visions form'd by gloomy-minded grief.  
 We will each art, each tender art employ,  
 To sooth your sorrows, to restore your peace,  
 You come not to the proud unfeeling race  
 Of yesterday : we know the turns of fortune ;  
 Have drunk the cup, the wholesome cup of sufferings,  
 That not inflames but moderates the mind,  
 Then fear not, princess ; let me call you daughter!  
 Your treatment shall be such as well becomes  
 The dignity of woe, becomes the great,  
 The fair unhappy. Nought shall touch your honour.  
 I know, I feel your beauty : but here dwell  
 The gods of hospitality and faith ;  
 The hymeneal powers are honour'd here.  
 Yes, I will shield thee, equal with *Electra*,  
 With my lov d daughter in thy friendship blest.

*Cas.* In spite of swelling tears that choak the way,  
 Of bitter tears by big remembrance shed,  
 I own thy goodness, thank thee, *Agamemnon*.  
 Mean time, in vain, are all thy generous cares,  
 On my account. The gods of death will, soon,  
 Extend o'er me their all protecting wing,  
 I shall not long, I shall not want protection :  
 But, who, devoted prince, will give it thee ?  
 Even while we talk the secret wheels are turning,  
 That lift the vile, and lay the mighty low.  
 I pity thee, the house of *Pelops* pity :  
 Forgive me *Troy* : I pity thy destroyers.

*Enter*



*Enter an Officer.**Offic.* A messenger from *Ayas*, Sir--*Aga.* 'Tis well.

To my apartment lead him---you mean while,

*[To Melisander]*Attend the princess; grace her with such honours,  
As suits her to receive, and me to give.

## S C E N E III.

CASSANDRA, CHORUS of Trojan Captives, MELI-  
SANDER.*Mel.* Fair princess, stop these tears. Exert that best,  
That noblest virtue, which can master fortune,  
An equal mind.*Cass.* Not for myself I weep!  
But, oh my dear companions! How for you  
My bosom yearns!*Chor.* We have together liv'd!  
Together let us die!*Cass.* Together liv'd!  
At this ten thousand images awake,  
Ten thousand little tenderneſſes throb.*Chor.* O days of youth! O careless days! Un-  
taught  
To weep, if love shed not the pleasing tear.*Cass.* O woods! O fountains! O delightful meads!  
That lent us flowers, the prime of blooming May,  
'To deck our tresses.*Chor.* O the yellow banks  
Of fair *Scamander*! in whose silver stream  
We us'd to bathe, beneath our secret shade.*Cass.* O chearful *Iliad's* airy summits! where  
The gods delight to dwell.*Chor.*O silent *Troy*!  
Whose

Whose streets have often echo'd with our song.

*Cass.* O the lost labours of a ruin'd people.  
O country ! freedom ! friends ! relations ! All,  
That gives or taste or dignity to life,  
All, all is gone, beyond recovery gone !

*Chor.* Then let us die !

*Cass.* For me, the hunted hart  
More fervent pants not for the cooling stream,  
Than I to wrap me in the quiet shades  
Of death. But, ah ! my helpless friends, for you  
I feel it's keenest anguish.

*Chor.* Not for us,  
Feel not for us. What comfort have we left ?  
What hope, what wish in life ?---One healing pang,  
And then we weep no more.

*Cass.* Refreshing thought !  
And then from bondage, pain, from every ill,  
For ever free, we meet our friends again ;  
Our parents, brothers, sisters, lovers meet.

*Chor.* Then let us die ! and sudden be the blow !

*Cass.* The gods assent.---Behold the happy shore!  
But, ah ! there lies a stormy sea betwixt !

*Mel.* So sings the plaining nightingale her woes.

*Cass.* Ah, far unlike the nightingale !--She sings,  
Unceasing thro the balmy nights of *May* ;  
She sings from love and joy, while we, alas !---

*Mel.* Behold the queen.---Deep--wrap'd in thought  
she seems.---

*Cass.* O direful musings !--Lead us from her presence.

S C E N E IV.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

Sweet peace of mind ! whence pleasure borrows taste,  
Daughter of virtue ! whither art thou fled ?

To

To what calm cottage, to what blameless shade,  
 Far from these guilty walls ? O walls ! O race  
 To horrors doom'd !---Before me gathers fast  
 A deepning gloom, with unknown terrors big--  
 Not quite unknown.---Gods ! what a dreadful hint  
 Flash'd from *Egisthus*, when I saw him last !  
 And to what desperate actions cannot safety,  
 Ambition, love and vengeance drive the soul !  
 Distraction lies that way---yet, how escape ?  
 Shame urges on behind, un pitying shame,  
 That worst of furies, whose fell aspect frights  
 Each tender feeling from the human breast.  
 Goodness itself even turns in me to gall,  
 And only serves to heighten my despair.  
 How kind was *Agamemnon* ! generous ! fond !  
 How more than usual mild ! As if, on purpose,  
 To give these tortures their severest sting.  
 Happy ! compar'd to this tormented state,  
 Where honour only lives with inward lash,  
 To punish guilt, happy the harden'd wretch,  
 Who feels no conscience, and who fears no crime!--  
 Oh horrid ! horrid ! Oh flagitious thought !  
 How is it with the mind that can endure  
 A thought so dire !---My sole remaining hope  
 Is death, kind death, that amiable sleep,  
 Which wakes no more,---at least to mortal care---  
 But then the dark Hereafter that may come.---  
 There is no anchor that against this storm,  
 This mighty sea of doubts and fears, can hold.  
 Hopeless, I drive.---One thought destroys another.--  
 This stranger too !---Should it be *Melissander*--  
 Is there a fear, however idle, wild,  
 And even almost impossible, which guilt,  
 The feeble-hearted guilt not entertains ?---  
 I order'd his attendance.---See, he comes.

SCENE V.

CLYTEMNESTRA, MELISANDER.

*Cly.* Stranger, are you not he, whom *Agamemnon*  
By an amazing chance, in his return,  
Sav'd from a desert isle?

*Mel.* Madam, the same.

*Cly.* I much admire your fortunate deliverance,  
And wish to hear your story: why there left,  
And how sustain'd. Indulge me with it stranger.

*Mel.* Madam, I come this moment from the king,  
Charg'd with a matter which requires dispatch:  
But, that transacted once, without delay,  
I will attend your orders.

*Cly.* Then, it seems,  
You are not quite a stranger in *Mycenæ*.  
What is your country?

*Mel.* Greece.

*Cly.* What part of Greece?

*Mel.* At *Athens* I was born.

*Cly.* But in *Mycenæ*,  
Have you not in *Mycenæ* been before?

*Mel.* There are not, madam, many parts of Greece  
To me unknown.

*Cly.* Why thus avoid my question?  
Have you been here before?

*Mel.* Madam, I have.

*Cly.* Here in this palace?---Ha! why stand you  
silent?

You keep your eyes unmov'd upon the ground.  
What should this mean? Beneath that rough disguise  
There lurks, methinks, a form, which somewhere I  
Have seen.

*Mel.* The dream of fancy, that the more  
It is indulg'd, perplexes still the more.

I tarry

I tarry here too long ; the king's commands  
Admit of no delay.

*Cly.*

'Tis so ! 'tis so !

Air, features, manner, voice, this study'd haste,  
The shifts of one unpractis'd in deceit,  
All all conspire---One image wakes another,  
And thick they flash upon me !

*Mel.*

You grow pale,

You tremble, madam ; that mistake, I find,  
Concerning me turns wilder and disturbs you.  
Let me retire---

*Cly.*

A moment---stay---

*Mel.*

In vain,

I find it is in vain to wrap me longer  
In these evasions,

*Cly.*

*Melifander !*

*Mel.*

Madam---

*Cly.* And can it be ? Behold I then the man,  
Whom I so long have number'd with the dead ?  
Almighty gods ! Behold I *Melifander* ?  
But, ah ! how chang'd ! how darken'd with suspicion  
Yes I am deem'd the author of his woes.

*Mel.* Madam, forgive---

*Cly.*

Why else from me conceal

Your wish'd return---I plainly am distrusted---  
By *Agamemnon* too---It was unkind,  
Unjust, unfriendly, shocks me, *Melifander*.

*Mel.* Indeed you wrong me, madam, wrong me  
much,

To judge me apt or to conceive or spread  
Distrust. I would have perish'd by my self,  
Unknown, unwept, in helpless solitude,  
Rather than here return to this full world,  
To set my mistress and her lord at variance.  
O think me not a busy peace destroyer!  
Accursed is the wretch, to social life



The most inhuman foe, who in the nice,  
The tender scenes of life, dares rashly meddle,  
And sow division between friends and lovers.

*Cly.* The generous heart is ever slow to blame.  
But, *Melisander*, not to me were owing,  
Not in the least to me, those cruel woes,  
This worse than death, which you so long have suffer'd.

Instead of that, your fate, how, whither gone,  
If carry'd off, or secretly destroy'd,  
Was all a mournful mystery to me,  
Dark as the night on which you disappear'd.  
Did you but know, here in my secret soul,  
What undissembled pangs your absence rous'd,  
What I have felt for you, and for my self,  
In losing such a wife and faithful friend ;  
Knew you but these, O knew you *Melisander*,  
How your disaster has been truly mine,  
You never could suspect me.

*Mel.*

Witness heav'n !

I never did---Your heart I know disdains,  
A thought that looks like cruelty or fraud.  
From the first moment that his ruffians seiz'd me,  
I had no doubt, I knew it was *Egisthus*.  
Some time before I mark'd the rising storm,  
And meant to warn you, but it sudden burst,  
And bore me far away, far from all means,  
Even from all hope of lending you assistance.  
Ay! there I suffer'd most. My fears for you,  
At once by guile and violence beset,  
Took off the point of my own proper woes.  
But when your awful virtues struck my thought,  
Your wisdom, spirit, resolution, truth ;  
That dread effulgence of the spotless soul,  
Which smites the hardest villain into shame ;  
My fears appear'd impertinent and vain.

Yet

Yet doubtless, madam, you have had occasion!  
 For a firm ruling hand and watchful eye,  
 For every virtue; and I truly joy,  
 That *Agamemnon* finds at his return  
*Egisthus* by your conduct thus restrain'd.

*Cly.* By heavens! he tries me.---O suspicious guilt!  
 (*Aside.*)

Your words are friendly, but your deeds are doubtful.  
 No, *Melissander*, friendship with distrust  
 Can never dwell. And that I am distrusted  
 To me is certain---In a matter too,  
 That much concern'd my peace, concern'd my honour.  
 For did you even ascribe your woes to me,  
 You could not manage with more distant caution.

*Mel.* Whence is it that the noble *Clytemnestra*,  
 Who us'd to shine in a superior sphere  
 Of fair serenity and candid peace,  
 Should to these doubts descend, these dark suspicions?  
 For me, I here attest the gods, my soul  
 Ne'er knew a thought, that swell'd not with esteem,  
 With love, and veneration of your virtues.  
 And for the king, no young enraptur'd lover,  
 In all the first effusions of his soul,  
 New to the mighty charm; no friend, who meets,  
 After long years of dark and silent absence,  
 His happy friend again, feels livelier joy,  
 Than *Agamemnon* feels, while his glad tongue  
 Runs out in endless praise of *Clytemnestra*---  
 But I must wait his orders.---

*Cly.*

Do your duty.

I too must go, must to *Egisthus* strait  
 Impart this dreadful news.

[*Aside.*]

SCENE

## SCENE VI.

*Mel. alone.*

She went abruptly---  
And as we talk'd, methought, strange passion shook  
Her inward frame, and darken'd every feature.

Behold the black, the guilt-concealing night  
Fast closes round. Wide, thro' this ample palace,  
The lamps begin to shine. The tempest falls ;  
The weary winds sink, breathless. But, who knows,  
What fiercer tempest yet may shake this night ?  
Soul-chearing *Phœbus* with thy sacred beams  
O quickly come, and chase these sullen shadows.

## ACT V. SCENE I.

CLYTEMNESTRA, EGISTHUS.

EGISTHUS.

**A**H *Clytemnestra* ! what a change is here !  
And must I then thus steal an interview ?  
Are we alone ?

*Cly.* You fright me with that question :  
You look astonish'd.

*Egist.* On the brink of ruin  
We, tottering, stand.

*Cly.* That is no news to me.

*Egist.* But-----

*Cly.* What ?

*Egist.* We are discover'd.

*Cly.* Ha ! discover'd.

*Egist.* Yes certainly discover'd. *Arcas* now,  
By *Agamemnon*'s orders, in the city  
Collects a band, to seize me at the banquet,  
A short hour hence. And my accusers, madam,

You

You may be well assur'd are not your friends.

*Cly.* 'Tis plain ! 'tis plain !---The parting fogs dis-  
perse :

And now the doubtful scene stands all reveal'd---  
Who could have thought they should dissemble thus ?  
But I can tell you more.

*Egist.* What, madam speak,  
For danger presses on us.

*Cly.* Saw you him,  
This seeming stranger, sav'd by *Agamemnon* ?

*Egist.* *Arcas* and he to day, my friends inform me,  
Were busy with the king ; and doubtless, then,  
It was concerted that I should be seiz'd.

*Cly.* Ah ! did you know, *Egisthus*, who he is ?---

*Egist.* Who ?

*Cly.* *Melifander.*

*Egist.* Gods ! and does he live ?  
For my confusion sav'd ! O gross, gross folly !  
To do an action of that kind by halves.  
Had he been silent dust---To please you, madam,  
From a false tenderness for you, he lives---

*Cly.* A mighty merit ! glorious boast indeed !  
Hear him, ye gracious gentle powers of love !  
From tenderness for me, he did not murder  
A worthy blameless man, who never hurt him ;  
He murder'd not my friend, my faithful friend.  
Ah ! 'tis such tenderness, that makes me wretched ;  
Such tenderness, that still in blacker guilt,  
In the last depth of misery will plunge me.

*Egist.* It is not, madam, now a time for this.  
Think of our situation : close beset  
By all those ills which mortals most abhor,  
Whom have we to confide in but each other ?  
And this sad meeting is perhaps our last.  
Concord alone, and vigorous measures, can  
Prevent our ruin---But, from *Melifander*,

What

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What did you learn ? Are you your self suspected ?

*Cly.* I cannot find I am :--- And yet I must.

*Egist.* But, as for me, my ruin is no secret.

*Cly.* 'Tis true, some dark attempt goes on against you.

*Egist.* Then have I rightly done.

*Cly.* What have you done ?

*Egist.* What prudence, justice, love and vengeance, all

Demand---

*Cly.* Immortal powers ! you have not ?---

*Egist.* No :

But must, and will---What else can you propose ?

*Cly.* Oh, any thing besides ! immediate flight,  
Eternal absence, death !---

*Egist.* Let others die

Let the proud, faithless, false, injurious tyrant ;

The hero glorious in his daughter's murder ;

The scourge of *Greece*, who has, from wild ambition,

Shed so much blood---let *Agamemnon* die !

*Cly.* Oh heavens and earth ! you shock me to distraction !

I have, *Egisthus*, hitherto avoided

This dreadful point, still hoping you might drop

Your horrid resolution : now I tell you,

Before the listening gods, I plainly tell you,

That *Agamemnon* shall not fall unwarn'd :

You shall not rise by me into his throne :

I will not be the tool of your ambition ;

Will not be wretched, infamous for ever,

The blush of women, the disgrace of nature !

That you may gain your execrable views,  
Mask'd under smooth pretences.---I am guilty ;

Alas ! I am---But think not therefore, tyrant !

To give me law. There are degrees in guilt ;

And I have still my reason left, have left

Some



Some resolution, some remains of virtue :  
 Yes, I dare die ; and who dares die, *Egisthus*,  
 Needs not be driven to villainous extremes !  
 Mark me, insulting man !---My certain cure  
 Of every woe, my cordial draught is ready ;  
 And if you do not promise me, here swear  
 To drop your fell designs on *Agamemnon*,  
 To quit this palace---You may still escape---  
 And never see me more ; I go, I go,  
 This moment to discover ail and die !

*Egist.* What ! *Clytemnestra* !

*Cly.* Nothing shall dissuade me.

I will not argue more---Say, only say,  
 Must I betake me to this cruel refuge ?  
 This dire necessity ?

*Egist.*

Permit me, madam ;

Hear me but once, and then pursue your purpose.

Suppose us guilty, what you will ;---yet, madam,  
 Shall we acknowledge and proclaim that guilt ?  
 Shall we, by patient waiting for our doom,  
 By pitiful neglect of self-defence,  
 Unheard of meannefs ! stamp it into shame ?  
 No ; let us wipe it out with bold success.  
 It is success that colours all in life :  
 Success makes fools admir'd, makes villains honest ;  
 All the proud virtue of this vaunting world  
 Fawns on success, and power, how'er acquir'd.

If then, supposing guilt, it were a madness  
 To stoop to shame, can words express the meanness  
 Of stopping short, with infamy and ruin,  
 When justice, love, and vengeance, urge to glory !  
 Instead of being deem'd a generous queen,  
 The brave avenger of her sex's honour,  
 Fam'd for her spirit, for her just resentment ;  
 Who greatly punish'd a perfidious husband,  
 A cruel tyrant ; one, who from his bed,

His

His throne, propos'd, with open shame, to turn her,  
And to her place take his country's foe,  
To take a *Trojan* captive, proud *Cassandra* :  
Instead of such renown, can *Clytemnestra* ---  
Forgive the doubt---Can she submit to pass,  
Thro future times, for an abandon'd woman ?  
A feeble, spiritless, abandon'd woman !---  
Nay, madam, hear the truth, what now I tell you  
Must, in a little scanty hour, take place ;  
In a few moments, you must be the first  
Or last of women ; be the public scorn,  
Or admiration of approving *Greece*---  
You know you must ;---be *Agamemnon's* slave,  
*Cassandra's* slave, or nobly punish both,  
And reign with me in happiness and glory.

Consult your heart ; can you resolve on shame ?  
On voluntary shame ? That only ill  
The generous fear, which kills the soul it self.  
Were those fair features, full of lovely grandeur,  
Form'd for confusion ? That majestic front,  
To be bow'd down with infamy and vileness ?  
Ah ! can you bear contempt ? The venom'd tongue  
Of those whom ruin pleases ? The keen sneer,  
The lewd reproaches of the rascal herd ;  
Who for the self-same actions, if successful,  
Would be as grossly lavish in your praise ?---  
To sum up all in one---Can you support  
The scornful glances, the malignant joy,  
Or more detested pity of a rival ?  
Of a triumphant rival ?---No ; you cannot.  
That conscious worth, which kindles in your eye,  
Tells me you cannot.---

But in vain disputes  
No more to squander these important moments ;  
Know, that I have not, to the frail decision  
Of wav'ring fear and female weakness left

Our

Our freedom, safety, happiness and honour.  
 Even in your own despite you shall be sav'd.  
 And could you be so lost to reason, wild,  
 To do what woman never did before,  
 What shocks humanity, accuse your self?  
 You only court dishonour to no purpose?  
 For *Agamemnon* now cannot escape;  
 I am already master of this palace;  
 All is prepar'd, my people all are fix'd,  
 All properly dispos'd; and here I swear,  
 By sacred justice, glory, love and vengeance!  
 He dies!--dies in the bath, before the banquet!--  
 And with him dies *Cassandra*, she, who dares,  
 In her presumptuous thought, usurp thy honours.  
 She weeps!--O my ador'd! my *Clytemnestra*!  
 Forgive this barbarous necessary truth!  
 Did I not love thee, love thee more than empire,  
 Than life and glory, would I thus disclose  
 These dangerous secrets? Could I not have veil'd,  
 And with more certain caution, gain'd my purpose.  
*Cly.* Oh that you had, *Egisthus*! then, alas!  
 I should have fondly thought myself less guilty.  
*Egist.* I lose myself in softness, while the time,  
 With danger big, demands intrepid deeds.  
 Wipe off these tears---When next we meet again,  
 All will be well.

## S C E N E II.

*Cly.* Ah! when we meet again!  
 I stand, at last, convinc'd, and must dissemble  
 Yet how dissemble? Painted, in my face,  
 Are the full horrors of this bloody deed.

But who are these approaching? Ha! *Cassandra*!  
 How fair she seems! how lovely! hateful charms!  
 That well may rival mine, decay'd, and sunk

By guilt and sorrow---She possess my bed !  
 Possess my scepter !---This restores my spirit ;---  
 I am abus'd ! too patient !---Perish all !  
 Perish My self, *Egisthus*, *Agamemnon* !  
 So this proud rival, this *Cassandra* perish !

## S C E N E III.

CASSANDRA, Trojan captives, MELISANDER.

*Mel.* Daughters of *Ilium* ! By the king's command,  
 I come to ask your presence at the banquet.  
 Till then allow me to partake your woes :  
 I have a reverence for them. I myself,  
 Thanks to the gracious gods ! have known misfortune ?  
 I am with grief acquainted ; therefore can  
 For others feel. Sweet source of every virtue,  
 O sacred sorrow ! He who knows not thee,  
 Knows not the best emotions of the heart,  
 Those tender tears that humanize the soul,  
 The sight that charms, the pang that gives delight ;  
 He dwells too near to cruelty and pride,  
 And is a novice in the school of vir ue.

*Cass.* We thank thee, stranger, for thy generous  
 pity.

Heaven has, it seems throughout diffus'd the good.  
 May the kind gods, the hospitable powers,  
 For this befriend thee ! Thou must wander still,  
 Wilt their protection want---But *Agamemnon* !  
 Where is the king ?

*Mel.* He bathes him for the banquet,  
 The banquet earn'd by ten years war and toil.

*Cass.* Short-sighted man ! to dream of festal joy,  
 When his next banquet is perhaps with *Pluto*.

He comes ! the god comes rushing on my soul !  
 O gently sooth me with the voice of music !  
 Alluage my pangs with harmony ! Methinks,

Vol. II.

G

I hear



I hear *Apollo's* lyre.

*Mel.*

Myſterious powers !

*Caff.* 'Tis gone--And now harſh diſcord takes its place :

Dire yellings now affright my trembling ear.  
What means this uproar of the howling foreſt ?  
The lionefs and wolf, together leagu'd,  
Pursue the lion's life.---Behold ! the ſnare,  
Th' infernal ſnare is ſet, ſpread by the ſtream,  
Where, unſuſpecting harm, he bathes at noon.  
Soon will theſe guiltleſs waters bluſh with blood.

*Mel.* There is a ſort of gloomy light in this,  
That ſaſhes horror on me.

*Caff.*

A black ſwarm

Of fell ideas ſeize my fancy. Hence !  
O ſnatch me from this palace ! ſhambles rather !  
It ſmells of carnage ; breathes a hideous ſtream,  
As if from gaping ſepulchres exhal'd.  
And, lo ! the ſpotleſs loves, the ſports, the joys,  
The weeping *Lares* fly : while in their place,  
The vices all, the raging furies come ;  
And with them *Comus*, the fluſh'd god of banquets,  
Beſmear'd with gore--They ſing the funeral hymn--  
What do I ſee ? What mean theſe mangled forms !  
Theſe pale, theſe nightly phantoms ; ſuch as riſe,  
To working fancy's eye, in troubled dreams ?  
See ! where they fit for ever at the gates,  
Demanding vengeance--Vengeance is at hand----  
Ha ! 'tis the murder'd boys, whoſe limbs were, here,  
Serv'd up to their own fire, to be devour'd !----

*Mel.* She wakes my dread--The ſtory of *Thyeſtes* !

*Caff.* With this devoted race involv'd I fall :

Nor falls the ſlave alone--The maſter falls.  
But man ſhall die for man, for woman woman :  
Remember this.

*Mel.*

The ſlave, the maſter fall !

*Caff.*



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*Cass.* Ah bosom-traitress ! Ill-persuaded queen !  
And canst thou then the barbarous secret keep ?---

*Mel.* What queen ? what secret ? Speak more plain,  
*Cassandra !*

*Cass.* From guilt, in vain, to greater guilt you fly,  
From crime to crime precipitated---No !  
The wicked find no peace---Distraction waits thee !--  
One effort more--Yes, save thy lord, and die---  
That throw belong'd to virtue-- Cannot then  
The gentle powers prevail ? A moment yet,  
The doubtful balance yet allows a moment--  
Down, down it goes, for vengeance and for *Troy* !  
But ah ! such vengeance, as even foes themselves  
Abhor to see !

*Mel.* She staggers all my reason.  
Unveil these dreadful oracles---Perhaps---

*Cass.* Yes, in a moment, they will be too plain.  
The moment comes ! The furies lash it on !  
Ha ! Now !

*Mel.* Unusual horror creeps---

*Cass.* Alas !

Keep from the murderous sacrificer's hand,  
O keep the victim bull ! Lo ! seiz'd, he spurns,  
He foams in vain.---Behold the lifted blow !  
Behold the thirsty steel !---They strike him !---Hark !  
What dismal echoes run from room to room !

*Mel.* I heard a distant noise !

*The noise of Agamemnon's assassination  
heard indistinctly, and at a distance,  
behind the scenes.*

*Cass.* Again !---They strive,  
Th' assassins labour who shall wound him most.  
'Tis done !---He falls !---

*AGAMEMNON, behind the scenes.*

[ *He noise heard distinctly, and near.*  
Off ! villains ! cowards ! off !---

By villains murder'd!---Oh!

*Mel.*

Great gods! the king!--

S C E N E IV.

MELISANDER, CASSANDRA, Trojan *captives*,  
ELECTRA, ORESTES.

*Elec.* Stop generous stranger! *Agamemnon's* friend!

*Mel.* What would *Electra*? what with *Melisander*?

*Elec.* Heavens *Melisander*!

*Mel.*

To the king's assistance

I fly; detain me not.

*Elec.*

He is no more!--

*Mel.* Ha! dead!

*Elec.*

Yes, murder'd by *Egisthus*! dead!

Pierc'd with a thousand wounds! O horror! horror!--

We have not time for grief---*Orestes*---Quick!

Fly! save my brother!

*Orest.*

Leave my father!--No!

It is but once that I have ever seen him,

Shall I no more?

*Elec.*

But to revenge his death,

O fly, *Orestes*, for that glorious purpose!

Tremendous gods; Methinks, I see his ghost,

That beckons you away!

*Orest.*

I come! I come!

On *Melisander*—

*Elec.*

Brother!

*Orest.*

Oh, my sister!

What will become of thee?

*Elec.*

Good *Melisander*,

O guard my brother! save our only hope!

I heard a noise

Farewel!

*Orest. going.*

Ah! poor *Electra*!

S C E N E

SCENE V.

ELECTRA, CASSANDRA, Trojan captives.

*Elec.* The murderers come! stain'd with my father's blood!

Hide me, *Cassandra*, hide me from a fight  
I cannot bear, a scene to nature shocking!

SCENE VI.

*The back-scene opening discovers, at a distance, Agamemnon's body. Electra throws herself by it.*

CASSANDRA, Trojan captives, EGISTHUS with some of his party.

*Egist.* Enough, my friends!---How low, how silent,  
now,

The mighty boaster lies!---Another blow  
Crowns my revenge---

*Cass.* It shall not, base assassin!  
The gods are just; amidst the crimes of men,  
Are firmly just, supremely wise and good:  
The gods are here, in all their terrors present!  
See where in dreadful majesty they sit!  
And write thy doom in *Agamemnon's* blood!

*Egist.* Think not to shake me with these gloomy  
fables:

This arm that has acquir'd, shall guard my power;  
And since I now enjoy my long-wish'd vengeance,  
All here is calm and chearful.

*Cass.* The false boast

Of agonizing guilt! Thy soul, I see,

Beneath this harden'd pride, this brutal courage,

Boils with black torments, and with inward tempest.  
 I know whence breaks that gleam of joy athwart thee,  
 As lightning flashes o'er a troubled sky :  
 Thou dreamst the prince now falls beneath thy fury :  
 But hear and tremble ---young *Orestes* lives !

*Egist.* Hence with thy vain predictions, doating  
 woman !---

## S C E N E VII.

EGISTHUS, CASSANDRA, &c. and to them assassins  
 sent to murder ORESTES.

*Egist.* Well, is *Orestes* dead ?

*Assass.*

Ah, sir ! escap'd--

When all was in confusion, here, and tumult.

*Egist.* O nothing then is done !---Fly ! tardy vil-  
 lains !

Pursue him to the farthest verge of earth.---

No dark retreat, no country.--But here comes

Another storm. Distraction wings her pace.

## S C E N E VIII.

CLYTEMNESTA, EGISTHUS, CASSANDRA, &c.

*Cly.* Off ! give me way ! to desarts let me fly !

The wildest savage there !---

Why pierce me thus with looks ?---In every eye

There is a dagger ; chief in thine, (*to Egisthus*)--Hal-  
 villain !

I know thee ; know these eyes, where smiling love

To the red glarings of a fury's torch

Is now transform'd.---Yes, traitor ! turn away :

But, ere you go, give me my peace again ;

Give me my happy family around ;

Give

Give me my virtue, honour, nay my glory ;  
 Or give me death, tho death cannot relieve me.--  
 Are these the deeds of love ?---I cannot step,  
 Unless I dip my shivering feet in blood.  
 Compar'd with this polluted, this dire palace,  
 The sepulchre is gay.--But whither fly ?--  
 Ah ! what avails it where the guilty fly,  
 Since from themselves they cannot !--Ha ! behold !  
 The black abyfs discloses to my view ;  
 And down I go, a dark, a deep descent !---  
 Hell from beneath is mov'd at my approach :  
 Its princes flock around. Behold, they say,  
 The greatly-wretched, greatly-wicked woman !  
 Her who preferr'd the villain to the hero !  
 The *Trojan* shades, with sharp derision, thank me :  
 The *Grecian* droop--Lo ! where he comes himself !  
 See ! How in sullen majesty he stalks !  
 Oh look not on me with that silent scorn !---  
 I am too curs'd already !--

[*Faints into the arms of her attendants.*]

*Egist.* Bear her hence :  
 And look she be attended well.--But hark !  
 What new alarm ?

S C E N E IX.

EGISTHUS, CASSANDRA, &c. to them a MESSENGER.

*Mess.* As *Melifander*, sir,  
 Bore off *Orestes*, to th' assembled senate  
 He show'd the prince, and rouz'd them to revenge.  
 'Tis nought but rage. The people, in a torrent,  
 By *Arcas* headed, pour upon the palace.  
 Besides, each moment, *Agamemnon's* troops --

*Egist.* Quick ! summon here my friends--In *Io's*  
 grove

G 4

They



They ready wait. We this important day  
Will or with conquest crown, or bravely die.

*Cass.* No, tyrant no! the gods refuse thee that :  
Not like the brave, but like the trembling coward,  
Th' assassinating coward, thou shall die ;

There ! in that spot, where *Agamemnon* lies !

*Egist.* Lead these ill boding women to their fate ;  
And guard *Electra*.

*Cass.* The most grateful gift  
A tyrant can bestow is instant death.  
We shall be happy soon. But all the gods,  
Combining all their mercy, from remorse,  
From scorn and misery, cannot save the villain.

*The End of the Fifth Act.*

---

# EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs. CIBBER.

**O**UR bard, to modern epilogue a foe,  
Thinks such mean mirth but deadens generous woe ;  
Dispels in idle air the moral sigh,  
And wipes the tender tear from pity's eye :  
No more with social warmth the bosom burns ;  
But all the unfeeling selfish man returns.

Thus he began :--- And you approv'd the strain ;  
'Till the next couplet sunk to light in vain.  
You check'd him there.--To you, to reason just,  
He owns he triumph'd in your kind disgust.  
Charm'd by your frown, by your displeasure grac'd,  
He hails the rising virtue of your taste.  
Wide will its influence spread as soon as known :  
Truth, to be lov'd, needs only to be shown.  
Confirm it, once, the fashion to be good :  
(Since fashion leads the fool, and awes the rude)

---

\* Another epilogue was spoken after the first representation of the play, which began with the first six lines of this : but the rest of that epilogue, having been very justly disliked by the audience, this was substituted in its place.

## EPILOGUE.

*No petulance shall wound the public ear ;  
No hand applaud what honour shuns to bear :  
No painful blush the modest cheek shall stain ;  
The worthy breast shall heave with no disdain.  
Chastis'd to decency, the British stage  
Shall oft invite the fair, invite the sage :  
Both shall attend well pleas'd, well-pleas'd depart ;  
Or if they doom the verse, absolve the heart.*

**ALFRED:**

# ALFRED: A MASQUE.

Represented before their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales, at *Cliffden*, on the first of *August*, 1740.

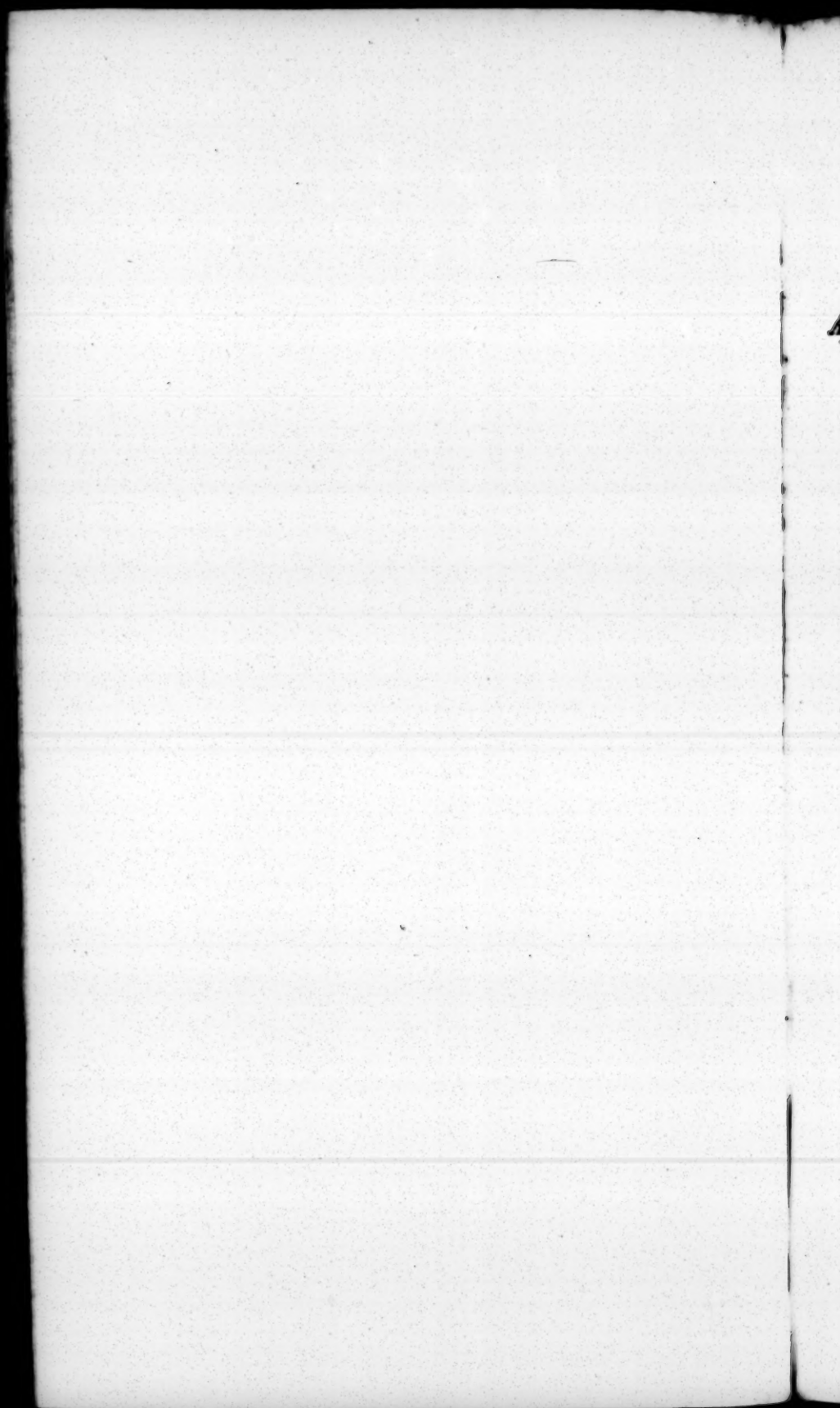
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By Mr. THOMSON and Mr. MALLET.

---

*Si velimus cum priorum temporum necessitate certare, vincemur. Ingeniosior est enim ad excogitandum simulatio, veritate; servitus, libertate; metus, amore.*  
Plin. Pan. Trajan.

---





## The ARGUMENT.

*After the Danes had made themselves masters of Chippenham, the strongest city in the kingdom of Wessex; Alfred was at once abandoned by all his subjects. In this universal defection, that monarch found himself obliged to retire into the little isle of Athelney in Somersetshire; a place then rough with woods and of difficult access. There, in the habit of a peasant, he lived unknown, for some time, in a shepherd's cottage. He is supposed to be found in this retreat by the Earl of Devon; whose castle, upon the river Tau, was then besieged by the Danes.*

## The PERSONS.

|                    |        |              |
|--------------------|--------|--------------|
| ALFRED,            | } by } | Mr. Milward. |
| ELTRUDA,           |        | Mrs. Horton. |
| HERMIT,            |        | Mr. Quin.    |
| EARL of Devon,     |        | Mr. Mills.   |
| CORIN, a shepherd, |        | Mr. Salway.  |
| EMMA, his wife,    |        | Mrs. Clive.  |

*A Bard, Soldiers, Spirits.*

*The SCENE represents a plain, surrounded with woods. On one side, a cottage : on the other, flocks and herds in distant prospect. A hermit's cave in full view, overhung with trees wild and grotesque.*

---

---

A L F R E D:  
A  
M A S Q U E.

ACT I. SCENE I.

C O R I N, E M M A,

E M M A.

**S**hepherd, 'tis he. Beneath yon aged oak,  
All on the flowery turf he lays him down.

*Cor.* Soft: let us not disturb him. Gentle *Emma*,  
Poor tho he be, unfriended and unknown,  
My pity waits with reverence on his fortune,  
Modest of carriage, and of speech most gracious,  
As if some saint or angel in disguise,  
Had grac'd our lowly cottage with his presence,  
He steals, I know not how, into the heart,  
And makes it pant to serve him. Trust me, *Emma*,  
He is no common man.

*Em.* Some lord, perhaps,  
Or valiant chief, that from our deadly foe,  
The haughty, cruel, unrelieving *Dane*,  
Seeks shelter here.

*Cor.* And shelter he shall find.  
Who loves his country, is my friend and brother  
Behold him well. Fair virtue in his aspect,

Even

Even thro the homely ruffet that conceals him,  
Shines forth and proves him noble. Seest thou *Emma*  
Yon western clouds ? The sun they strive to hide,  
Yet darts his beam around.

*Em.* Your thought is mine :  
He is not what his present fortunes speak him,  
But, ah ! the raging foe is all around us :  
We dare not keep him here.

*Cor.* Content thee, wife :  
This island is of strength. Nature's own hand  
Hath planted round a deep defence of woods,  
The sounding ash, the mighty oak ; each tree  
A sheltering grove : and choak'd up all between  
With wild encumbrance of perplexing thorns,  
And horrid brakes. Beyond this woody verge,  
Two rivers broad and rapid hem us in.  
Along their channel spreads the gulphy pool,  
And trembling quagmire, whose deceitful green  
Betrays the foot it tempts. One path alone  
Winds to this plain, so roughly difficult,  
This single arm, poor shepherd as I am,  
Could well dispute it with twice twenty *Danes* :

*Em.* Yet think, my *Corin*, on the stern decree  
Of that proud foe, " Who harbours or relieves  
" An *English* captain, dies the death of traitors :  
" But who their haunts discovers, shall be safe,  
" And high rewarded."

*Cor.* Now, just heaven forbid,  
A *British* man should ever count for gain  
What villainy must earn. No : are we poor ?  
Be honesty our riches. Are we mean,  
And humbly born ? The true heart makes us noble.  
These hands can toil, can sow the ground and reap  
For thee and thy sweet babes. Our daily labour  
Is daily wealth : it feeds us bread and raiment.  
Could *Danish* gold give more ? And for the death  
These

These tyrants threaten, let me rather meet it,  
Than e'er betray my guest.-----

*Em.* Alas the while,  
That loyal faith is fled from hall and bower,  
To dwell with village-swains!

*Cor.* Ah look! behold!  
Where like some goodly tree by wintry winds  
Torn from the roots and withering, our sad guest  
Lies on the ground diffus'd.

*Em.* I weep to see it.

*Cor.* Thou hast a heart sweet pity loves to dwell in.  
Dry up thy tears; and lean on this just hope:  
If yet to do away his country's shame,  
To serve her bravely on some blest occasion,  
If for these ends this stranger fought our cottage,  
The heavenly hosts are hovering here unseen,  
To watch and to protect him.---But oh! when---  
My heart burns for it---shall I see the hour  
Of vengeance on those *Danish* infidels,  
That war with heaven and us?

*Em.* Alas, my love!  
These passions are not for the poor man's state.  
To heaven and to the rulers of the land  
Leave such ambitious thoughts. Be warn'd my

*Corin:*  
And think our little all depends on thee.

## S O N G.

*O peace! the fairest child of heaven,  
To whom the sylvan reign was given,  
The vale, the fountain and the grove,  
With every softer scene of love:  
Return, sweet peace! and cheer the weeping swain;  
Return, with Ease and Pleasure in thy train.*

*Cor.* Hush: cease thy song--For see, our mournful  
guest

Has



Has rais'd his head---and lo! who comes to greet  
him ;

His friend, the woodman of the neighbouring dale,  
Whom late, as yester evening-star arose,  
At his request I found and hither brought.

## S C E N E II.

ALFRED, *Earl of DEVON.*

*Alf.* How long, O ever gracious heaven! how long  
Shall war thus desolate this prostrate land?  
All, all is lost---And *Alfred* lives to tell it!  
His cities laid in dust! his subjects slaughter'd!  
Or into slaves debas'd! the murderous foe  
Proud and exulting in the general shame!---  
Are these things so? and he without the means  
Of great revenge? cast down below the hope  
Of succouring those he weeps for? O despair!  
O grief of griefs!

*Devon.* Old as I am, my liege,  
In rough war harden'd, and with death familiar,  
These eyes have long forgot to melt with softness:  
But O, my gracious master, they have seen----  
All-pitying heaven!---such fights of ruthless rage,  
Of total desolation---

*Alf.* O my people!  
O ruin'd *England*!---*Devon*, those were blest,  
Who dy'd before this time. Ha! and those robbers,  
That violate the sanctity of leagues,  
The reverend seal of oaths; that basely broke,  
Like nightly ruffians, on the hour of peace,  
And stole a victory from men unarm'd,  
Those *Danes* enjoy their crimes! dread vengeance! son  
Of power and justice! come, array'd in terrors,  
Thy garment red with blood, thy keen sword drawn:  
O come, and on the heads of faithless men

Pour

Pour ample retribution ; men whose triumph  
 Upbraids eternal justice.---But no more :  
 Submission is heaven's due.---I will not launch  
 Into that dark abyfs where thought muſt drown.  
 Proceed, my lord : on with the mournful tale,  
 My griefs broke off.

*Deven.* From yonder heath-crown'd hill,  
 This iſland's eaſtern point, where in one ſtream  
 The *Thone* and *Parret* roll their blended waves,  
 I look'd, and ſaw the progreſs of the foe,  
 As of ſome tempeſt, ſome devouring fire,  
 That ruins without mercy where it ſpreads.  
 The riches of the year, the golden grain  
 That liberal crown'd our plains, lies trampled wide  
 By hoſtile feet, or rooted up and waſte  
 Deforms the broad high-way. From ſpace to ſpace,  
 Far as my ſtraining eye could ſhoot its beam,  
 Trees, cottages, and caſtles, ſmoak to heaven  
 In one aſcending cloud. But oh for pity !  
 That way, my lord, where yonder verdant height  
 Declining ſlides into a fruitful vale,  
 Unſightly now and bare ; a few poor hinds,  
 Grey-hair'd, and thinly clad, ſtood and beheld  
 The common ravage : motionleſs and mute  
 With hands to heaven uprais'd, they ſtood, and wept--  
 My tears attended theirs ---

*Alf.* If this ſad ſight  
 Could pain thee to ſuch anguiſh, what muſt I  
 Their king and parent feel ?—It is a torment  
 Beyond the ſtrength of patience to endure.  
 Why end I not at once this wretched being ?  
 The means are in my hand.—But ſhall a prince  
 Thus poorly ſhroud him in the grave from pain,  
 And ſenſe of ſhame ? The madman, nay the coward,  
 Has often dar'd the ſame. A monarch holds

His

His life in trust for others. I will live then :  
Let heaven dispose the rest.

*Devon.* Thrice noble *Alfred*,  
And *England's* only hope, whose virtues raise  
Our frail mortality, our human dust,  
Up to angelic splendor and perfection ;  
With you to bear the worst of ills, the spoil  
Of wasteful war, the loss of life or freedom,  
Is happiness, is glory.

*Alf.* Ah, look round thee :  
That mud-built cottage is thy sovereign's palace.  
Yon hind, whose daily toil is all his wealth,  
Lodges and feeds him. Are these times for flattery,  
Or call it praise ? such gaudy attributes  
Would misbecome our best and proudest fortunes.  
But what are mine ? what is this high-prais'd *Alfred* ?  
Among ten thousand wretches, most undone.  
That prince who sees his country laid in ruins,  
His subjects perishing beneath the sword  
Of foreign rage, who sees and cannot save them,  
Is but supreme in misery !

*Devon.* My Liege,  
Who has not known ill fortune, never knew  
Himself, or his own virtue. Be of comfort :  
We can but die at last. Till that hour comes :  
Let noble anger keep our hopes alive.  
A sudden thought, as if from heaven inspir'd,  
Darts on my soul. One castle still is ours,  
Tho close begirt and shaken by the *Danes*.  
In this disguise, my chance of passing on,  
Of entering there unknown, is promising,  
And wears a lucky face. 'Tis our last stake,  
And I will play it like a man whose life,  
Whose honour hangs upon a single cast.  
Mean while, my lord - - -

*Alf.*

*Alf.* Ha! *Devon*, thou hast rous'd  
 My slumbering virtue. I applaud thy thought.  
 The praise of this brave daring shall be thine :  
 The danger shall be common. We will both  
 Strait tempt the *Danish* camp, and gain this fort ;  
 To animate our brothers of the war,  
 Those *Englishmen* who yet deserve that name.  
 And hear, eternal Justice ! if my life  
 Can make atonement for them, King of Kings !  
 Accept thy willing victim. On my head  
 Be all their woes : To them be grace and mercy.  
 Come on, my noble friend.

*Dev.* Ah, good my liege,  
 What fits a private valor, and might grace  
 The simple soldier's courage, would proclaim  
 His general's rashness. You are *England's* king :  
 Your infant children, and your much-lov'd queen ;  
 Nay more, the public weal, ten thousand souls,  
 Whose hope you are, whose all depends on you,  
 Forbid this enterprize. 'Tis nobler virtue  
 To check this ardor, to reserve your sword  
 For some great day of known and high import ;  
 That to your country, to the judging world  
 Shall justify all hazards you may run.  
 This trial suits but me.

*Alf.* Well, go, my friend ;  
 If thou shalt prosper, thou wilt call me hence  
 To head my people from their fears recover'd.  
 May that good angel, who inspir'd thy thought,  
 Throw round thy steps a veil of cloudy air,  
 That thou may'st walk invisible and safe.  
 He's gone--and now without a friend to aid me,  
 I stand alone, abandon'd to the gloom  
 Of my sad thoughts -- Said I without a friend ?  
 Oh blasphemous distrust ! Have I not Thee  
 All-powerful friend and guardian of the righteous,  
 Have



Have I not Thee to aid me? Let that thought  
Support my drooping soul.---But, list. Ha! whence  
These air-born notes that sound in measur'd sweetness  
Thro this vast silence?

## S C E N E III.

*Solemn music is heard at a distance. It comes nearer in a  
full symphony: after which a single trumpet sounds a  
high and awakening air. Then the following stanza  
are sung by two aërial spirits unseen.*

## First SPIRIT.

Hear, Alfred, father of the state,  
Thy genius heaven's high will declare!  
What proves the hero truly great,  
Is never, never to despair:  
Is never to despair.

## Second SPIRIT.

Thy hope awake, thy heart expand  
With all its vigor, all its fires,  
Arise! and save a sinking land!  
Thy country calls, and heaven inspires.

## Both SPIRITS.

Earth calls, and heaven inspires

## S C E N E IV.

## ALFRED alone.

All hail, ye gentle ministers of heaven!  
Your song inspires new patience thro my breast,  
And generous hope: it wings my mounting soul  
Above th' entangling mafs of earthly passions,  
That keep frail man, tho struggling to be free,  
Still fluttering in the dust.

S C E N E



## S C E N E V.

ALFRED, *the HERMIT advancing from his cave.*

*Alf.* Thrice-happy Hermit !  
Whom thus the heavenly habitants attend,  
Blessing thy calm retreat ; while ruthless war  
Fills the polluted land with blood and crimes.  
In this extremity of *England's* fate ;  
Led by thy sacred character, I come  
For comfort and advice. Thy aged wisdom,  
Purg'd from the stormy cloud of human passions,  
And by a ray from heaven exalted, sees  
Deep thro futurity. Say what remains,  
What yet remains to save our prostrate country ?  
Nor scorn this anxious question even from me,  
A nameless stranger.

*Her.* *Alfred, England's king,*  
All hail ! and welcome to this humble cell.

*Alf.* Whence dost thou know me, venerable father ?

*Her.* Last night, when with a draught from that  
cool fountain

I had my wholesome, sober supper crown'd  
As is my stated custom, forth I walk'd,  
Beneath the solemn gloom and glittering sky,  
To feed my soul with prayer and meditation.  
And thus to inward harmony compos'd,  
That sweetest music of the grateful heart,  
Whose each emotion is a silent hymn,  
I to my couch retir'd. Strait on mine eyes  
A pleasing slumber fell, whose mystic power  
Seal'd up my senses, but enlarg'd my soul.  
At once, disclos'd amid the dark waste night,  
Appear'd a vision — not the dream of fancy,  
But sent from heav'n, prophetic, and divine.

For

For know, this ample element contains  
 Unnumber'd spiritual beings, or malign,  
 Or good to man. These, when the grosser eye  
 Of nature sleeps, oft play their several parts,  
 As on a scene, before th' attentive mind,  
 And to the favour'd man disclose the future.  
 Led by these spirits friendly to this isle,  
 I liv'd thro future ages ; felt the virtue,  
 The great, the glorious passions that will fire  
 Distant posterity : when guardian laws  
 Are by the patriot in the glowing senate  
 Won from corruption ; when th' impatient arm  
 Of liberty, invincible, shall scourge  
 The tyrants of mankind---and when the deep,  
 Through all her swelling waves, shall proudly joy  
 Beneath the boundless empire of thy sons.  
 I saw thee, *Alfred*, too---But o'er thy fortunes  
 Lay clouds impenetrable.

*Alf.* Ah, good hermit,  
 That scene is dark indeed ! Ye awful powers !  
 To what am I reserv'd ? Still must I roam  
 A warder here, inglorious and unknown ?  
 Or am I destin'd your great instrument,  
 From fierce oppression to redeem this land ?

*Her.* Perhaps, the last.--But, prince, remember,  
 then,  
 The vows, the noble uses, of affliction.  
 Preserve the quick humanity it gives,  
 The pitying, social sense of human weakness :  
 Yet keep thy stubborn fortitude entire,  
 The manly heart that to another's woe  
 Is tender, but superior to its own.  
 Learn to submit ; yet learn to conquer fortune.  
 Attach thee firmly to the virtuous deeds  
 And offices of life : to life itself,  
 With all its vain and transient joys, sit loose.

Chief

Chief, let devotion to the sovereign mind,  
 A steady, chearful, absolute dependance  
 On his best, wisest government, possess thee.  
 In thoughtless, gay prosperity, when all  
 Attends our wish, when nought is seen around us  
 But kneeling flattery, and obedient fortune;  
 Then are blind mortals apt, within themselves  
 To fix their stay, forgetful of the giver.  
 But when thus humbled, *Alfred*, as thou art  
 When to their feeble natural powers reduc'd,  
 'Tis then they feel this universal truth---  
 That heaven is all in all---and man is nothing.

*Alf.* I thank thee, father, for thy pious counsel.  
 And witness, thou dread power ! who seest my heart;  
 That if not to perform my regal task,  
 To be the common father of my people,  
 Patron of honour, virtue and religion ;  
 If not to shelter industry, to guard  
 Her honest portion from oppressive pride,  
 From wasteful riot, and the sons of rapine,  
 Who basely ravish what they dare not earn ;  
 If not to deal out justice, like the sun,  
 With equal light ; if not to spread thy bounty,  
 The treasures trusted to me, not my own,  
 On all the smiling ranks of nourish'd life ;  
 If not to raise our drooping *English* name,  
 To clothe it yet with terroure ; make this land  
 Renown'd for peaceful arts to bless mankind,  
 And generous war to humble proud oppressors :  
 If not to build on an eternal base,  
 On liberty and laws, the public weal :  
 If not for these great ends I am ordain'd,  
 May I ne'er idly fill the throne of *England* !

*Her.* Still may thy breast these sentiments retain,  
 In prosperous life.

*Alf.*

Prosperity were ruin,

H

Could

Could it destroy or change such thoughts as these.  
 When Those whom heaven distinguishes o'er millions,  
 Profusely gives them honours, riches, power,  
 Whate'er th' expanded heart can wish ; when they,  
 Accepting the reward, neglect the duty ;  
 Or worse, pervert those gifts to deeds of ruin :  
 Is there a wretch they rule so mean as they ?  
 Guilty, at once of sacrilege to heaven,  
 And of perfidious robbery to men---  
 But hark ! methinks I hear a plaintive voice  
 Sigh thro the vale, and wake the mournful echo.

## S O N G.

## I

*Sweet valley, stay, where, pensive lying,  
 For me, our children, England, sighing,  
 The best of mortals leans his head.  
 Ye fountains, dimpled by my sorrow,  
 Ye brooks that my complainings borrow,  
 O lead me to his lonely bed :  
 Or if my lover  
 Deep woods, you cover  
 Ah whisper where your shadows o'er him spread!*

## 2.

*'Tis not the loss of pomp and pleasure,  
 Of empire, or of tinsel treasure  
 That drops this tear, that swells this groan :  
 No ; from a nobler cause proceeding  
 A heart with love and fondness bleeding  
 I breathe my sadly-pleasing moan.  
 With other anguish  
 I scorn to languish :  
 For love will feel no sorrows but his own.*

S C E N E



## S C E N E VI.

ALFRED, HERMIT, ELTRUDA, *advancing.*

*Alf.* Sure, by the voice, and purport of the song,  
This generous mourner is my queen *Eltruda*.  
And yet how can that be?---O all good powers!  
'Tis she! 'tis she!

*Elt.* My lord, my life, my *Alfred*!  
Oh take me to thy arms; with toil o'ercome,  
And sudden transport, thus at once to find thee,  
In this wild forest, pathless and perplexed!

*Alf.* Come to my soul thou dearest, best of women!  
Come, and repose thy sorrows in my bosom.  
O all my passions mix in doubtful strife!  
If pain or joy prevail, I scarce can say,  
While thus I clasp thee, and recall the perils  
To which thy trembling steps have been expos'd.  
Why hast thou left the convent where I plac'd thee?  
Why, unprotected trust thee to a land,  
A barbarous land where rages *Danish* war!  
Our hospitable *England* is no more!

*Elt.* Dire was the cause, my *Alfred*. The rous'd  
country,  
All wild in breathless terror and confusion,  
Inform'd us, a near party of the *Danes*,  
Whose brutal fury spares no sex, no age,  
No place however privileg'd or holy,  
Were on full march that way. Instant I fled,  
In this disguise, with only these attendants:  
But in our way oft cheer'd by airy voices,  
To bear to this retreat our helpless children.

*Alf.* Ah wanderers too young! ah hapless children!  
But more unhappy Sire! who cannot give,  
'To those he loves, protection.

*Elt.* Thou too *Alfred*,  
H 2

Art



Art thou not unattended ? None to serve thee,  
 To soothe thy woes, to watch thy broken slumbers !  
 And when the silent tear o'erflows thy eye,  
 None, with the warm and cordial lip of love,  
 To kiss it off ! There is in love a power,  
 There is a soft divinity, that draws  
 Transport even from distress ; that gives the heart  
 A certain pang, excelling far the joys  
 Of gross unfeeling life. Besides, my *Alfred*,  
 Even had the fury of this barbarous foe  
 Not forc'd me from the convent, life is short ;  
 And now it trembles on the wing of danger :  
 Why should we lose it then ? One well-sav'd hour,  
 In such a tender circumstance to lovers,  
 Is better than an age of common time.

*Alf.* Oh 'tis too much ! thy tenderness o'ercomes me !  
 Nay, look not on me with that sweet dejection,  
 Thro' tears that pierce my soul ! Cheer thee, my love :  
 Hope still the best ; that better days await us,  
 And fairer from remembrance.---Thou, *Eltruda*,  
 Thou art a pledge of happiness !---On thee  
 Good angels wait ; they led thy journey hither :  
 And I have heard them, in this wild retreat,  
 Warbling immortal airs, and strains of comfort.--  
 But ah the foe is round us : and this isle  
 Now holds my soul's best wealth, the treasure'd store  
 Of all my joys.---I go to skirt it round,  
 To visit every creek and sedge bank,  
 Where rustles thro' the reeds the shadowy gale ;  
 Or where the bending umbrage drinks the stream ;  
 Lest danger unawares should steal upon us.  
 And now, by slow degrees, solemn and sad,  
 Wide-falling o'er the world, the nightly shades  
 Hush the brown woods, and deepen all their horrors :  
 While humbled into rest, and aw'd by darkness,  
 Each creature seeks the covert. To that cell  
 Retire, my life. I will not long be absent.

## ACT II. SCENE I.

ALFRED *alone.*

**T**IS now the depth of darkness and repose.  
 All nature seems to rest: while *Alfred* wakes  
 To think, and to be wretched.---Where yon oak  
 With wide and dusky shade o'erhangs the stream,  
 That glides in silence by, I took my stand:  
 What time the glow-worm thro' the dewy path  
 First shot his twinkling flame. I stood attentive,  
 Listening each noise from wood-clad hill and dale;  
 But all was hush'd around. Nor trumpet's clang,  
 Nor shout of roving foe, nor hasty tread  
 Of evening passenger, disturb'd the wide  
 And awful stillness. Homeward as I sped,  
 O'er many a delve, thro' many a path perplex,  
 Maze running into maze; ill-boding thoughts  
 Haunted my steps.---Perhaps my gallant friend,  
 Discover'd to the *Danes*, this moment bleeds  
 Beneath their swords! or lies a breathless corse,  
 The prey of midnight wolves.--Some mournful sound  
 Strikes sudden on my sense.

## SCENE II.

ALFRED, ELTRUDA.

*Elt.* Here will I lean  
 On this green bank, to wait the wish'd return  
 Of morning and my lord.

*Alf.* My gentle love,  
*Eltruda*, why to this untimely sky  
 Expose thy health? The dews of night fall fast:  
 The chill breeze sighs aloud.

*Elt.*

I could not rest.

H 3

Can

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 Of morning and my lord.

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 Expose thy health? The dews of night fall fast:  
 The chill breeze sighs aloud.

*Elt.*

I could not rest.

H 3

Can



Can love repose when apprehension wakes,  
 And whispers to the heart all dreadful things,  
 That walk with night and solitude ! Methought,  
 In each low murmur of the woods, I heard  
 Th' invading foe---or heard my *Alfred* groan !  
 Our tender infants too--- their fancy'd cries  
 Still sound within my ears !

*Alf.**Eltruda*, there

I am a woman too : I who should cheer,  
 And shelter thee from every care. My children !  
 The thought of what may chance to them, compleats  
 The father's sum of woes. O what safe shade  
 Can skreen their opening blossom from the storm  
 That beats severe on us ! Not sweeter buds  
 The primrose in the vale, nor sooner shrinks  
 At winter's churlish blast---

*El.*

Behold, my lord---

Good angels shield us--What a flood of brightness  
 Waves round our heads !

*Alf.*

The hermit moves this way.

That wondrous man holds converse with the host  
 Of higher natures. These far beaming fires  
 Were doubtless kindled up at his command,  
 Be silent and attentive.

## S C E N E III.

ALFRED, ELTRUDA, HERMIT.

*Her.*

I have heard

Thy fond complainings, *Alfred*.*Alf.*

You have then,

Good father, heard the cause that wrings them from  
 me.

*Her.* The human race are sons of sorrow born:  
 And each must have his portion. Vulgar minds  
 Refuse, or crouch beneath their load : the brave

Bear



Bear theirs without repining.

*Alf.*

Who can bear

The shaft that wounds him thro an infant's side ;  
When whom we love, to whom we owe protection,  
Implore the hand we cannot reach to save them ?

*Her.* Weep not *Eltruda*.--Yet thou art a king,  
All private passions fall before that name.  
Thy subjects claim thee whole.

*Alf.*

Can public trust,

O reverend sage ! destroy the softer ties  
That twine around the parent's yearning heart ?  
That holy passion heaven itself infus'd,  
And blended with the stream that feeds our life.

*Her.* You love your children, prince---

*Alf.*

Lives there on earth,

In air, or ocean, creature tame or wild  
That has not known this universal love ?  
All nature feels it intimate and deep,  
And all her sons of instinct or of reason.

*Her.* Then shew that passion in its noblest form.  
Season their tender years with every virtue,  
Social or self-retir'd ; of public greatness,  
Or lovely in the hour of private life ;  
With all that can exalt, or can adorn  
Their princely rank.

*Alf.*

Alas, their hope must stoop,

Such my unhappy fate, to humbler aims :  
Affliction and base want must be their teachers.

*Her.* Affliction is the wholesome soil of virtue :  
Where patience, honour, sweet humanity,  
Calm fortitude take root, and strongly flourish.  
But prosperous fortune, that allures with pleasure,  
Dazles with pomp, and undermines with flattery,  
Poisons the soil, and its best product kills.  
Should'st thou regain thy throne---

H 4

*Alfred.*

*Alfred.* My throne ? What glimpse,  
What smallest ray of hope---

*Hermit.* That day may come---

What do I feel ? My labouring breast expands  
To give the glorious inspiration room.  
And now the cloud that o'er thy future fate,  
Like total night, lay heavy and obscure,  
Fades into air : and all the brightening scene  
Dawns gay before me ! A long line of kings,  
From thee descending, glorious and renown'd,  
In shadowy pomp I see'

Genius of *England* ! hovering near,  
In all thy radiant charms appear.

O come and summon, from the world unknown,  
Those mighty chiefs, those sons of future fame,  
Who, ages hence, this island shall adorn,  
And spread to distant realms her glorious name.  
Slow let the visionary forms arise,  
And solemn pass before our wondring eyes.

[*Music grand and awful. The Genius descending  
sings the following*

### S O N G.

From those eternal regions bright,  
Where suns, that never set in night,  
Diffuse the golden day :  
Where spring unfading pours around,  
O'er all the dew-impearl'd ground,  
Her thousand colours gay :  
O whether on the fountain's flowery side,  
Whence living waters glide,  
Or in the fragrant grove,  
Whose shade embosoms peace and love,  
New pleasures all your hours employ,  
And ravish every sense with every joy !

Great

*Great heirs of empire ! yet unborn,  
Who shall this island late adorn ;  
A monarch's drooping thought to cheer,  
Appear ! appear ! appear !*

*Spirits of EDWARD III. PHILIPPA his queen,  
and the Black Prince his son, arise.*

*Herm.* *Alfred, look ; and say,  
What seest thou yonder ?*

*Alf.* *Three majestic shapes :  
Two habited like mighty warriors old ;  
A third in whose bright aspect beauty smiles  
More soft and feminine. A lucid veil,  
From her fair neck dependant floats around,  
Light-hovering in the gale.*

*Herm.* *O Alfred, man  
Belov'd of heaven, behold a king indeed ;  
Matchless in arms ; in arts of peaceful rule,  
A sovereign's truest glory, yet more fam'd,  
England's third Edward ! -- At his fear'd approach,  
Proud France, even now, thro all her dukedoms quakes.  
Her Genius sighs : and from th' eternal shore,  
The soul of her great Charles, a recent guest,  
Looks back to earth, and mourns the distant woes,  
His realms are doom'd to feel from Edward's wrath.  
Beneath his standard, Britain shall go forth,  
Array'd for conquest, terrible in glory :  
And nations shrink before her. O what deaths,  
What desolations shall her vengeance spread,  
From engines yet unfound ; whose lightnings flash,  
Whose thunders roar, amazing, o'er the plain :  
As if this king had summon'd from on high  
Heaven's dread artillery to fight his battle !*

*Nor is renown in war his sole ambition :  
A nobler passion labours in his breast —  
Alfred, attend - to make his people blest !  
The sacred rights that reason loudly claims*

For free-born men--these, *Alfred*, are his care :  
 Oft to confirm, and fix them on the base  
 Of equal laws-- O father of mankind !  
 Successive praises from a grateful land  
 Shall faint thy name for ever !

*Alf.* Holy sage,  
 Whom angels thus enlighten and inspire,  
 My bosom kindles at thy heaven-born flame.  
 Great *Edward* ! Be thy conquests and their praise  
 Unrival'd to thy self. But O thy fame  
 For care paternal of the public weal ;  
 For *England* blest at home--my wrapt heart pants  
 To equal that renown !

*Herm.* Know farther, *Alfred* ;  
 A sovereign's great example forms a people.  
 The public breast is noble, or is vile,  
 As he inspires it. In this *Edward*'s time,  
 Warm'd by his courage, by his honour rais'd  
 High flames the *British* spirit like the sun,  
 To shine o'er half the globe : and where it shines,  
 The cherish'd world to brighten and enrich.

Last see this monarch in his hour of leisure ;  
 Even social on a throne, and tasting joys  
 To solitary greatness seldom known,  
 As friend, as husband, and as father blest.  
 That god-like *Youth* remark, his eldest hope,  
 Who gives new lustre to the name he bears ;  
 A hero ere a man.-- I see him now  
 On *Cressy*'s glorious plain ! The father's heart,  
 With anxious love and wonder at his daring,  
 Beats high in mingled transport. Great himself,  
 Great above *jealousy*, the guilty mark  
 That brands all meaner minds, see, he applauds  
 The *filial excellence*, and gives him scope  
 To blaze in his full brightness !-- Lo, again  
 He sends him dreadful to a nobler field :



The danger and the glory all his own !  
*A captive king*, the rival of his arms,  
 I see adorn his triumph ! Heaven ! what grace  
 What splendor from his gracious temper mild  
 That triumph draws ! As gentle mercy kind,  
 He cheers the hostile prince whose fall he weeps !

*Alf.* A son so rich in virtues, and so grac'd  
 With all that gives those virtues fair to shine,  
 When I would ask of heaven some mighty boon,  
 Should claim the foremost place.

*Herm.* Remember then,  
 What to thy infant sons from thee is due,  
 As parent and as prince.

*Eltru.* Forgive me, Hermit,  
 Forgive a queen and wife her anxious fondness.  
 Yon beauteous shade, that, as I gaze her o'er,  
 My wonder draws, escapes your graver thought.

*Her.* O bright *Eltruda* ! thou whose blooming youth,  
 Whose amiable sweetness promise blessings  
 To *Alfred* and to *England* ! see, and mark,  
 In yonder pleasing form, the best of wives,  
 The happiest too, repaid with all the faith,  
 With all the friendship, love and duty claim.  
 She, powerful o'er the heart her charms enslave—  
 O virtue rarely practis'd !—uses nobly  
 That happy influence ; to prompt each purpose  
 Fair honour kindles in her *Edward's* breast.  
 Amid the pomps, the pleasures of a court,  
 Humble of heart, severely good ; the friend  
 Of modest worth, the parent of the poor.

*Eltruda* ! O transmit these noblest charms  
 To that fair daughter, that unfolding rose,  
 With which,\* as on this day, heaven crown'd your loves.

The

---

(\*) This masque was written to be acted at Clifden, on the  
 birth-day of her Royal Highness the princess Augusta.



*The spirit of ELIZABETH arises.*

*Alf.* Say, who is she, in whom the noble graces,  
Th' engaging manner, dignity and ease,  
Are join'd with manly sense and resolution?

*Her.* The great *Eliza*. She, amid a world  
That threatening swells in high commotion round her;  
Each dangerous state her unrelenting foe,  
And chief a proud enormous empire stretch'd  
O'er half mankind; with not one friendly power,  
But what her kind creating hand shall raise  
From out the marshes of the branching *Rhine*;  
And min'd, at home, her ever-tottering throne  
By restless bigots, who, beneath the mask  
Of mild religion, are to every crime  
Set loose, the faithless sons of barbarous zeal:  
Yet she shall crown this happy isle with peace,  
With arts, with riches, grandeur and renown;  
And quell, by turns, the madness of her foes.  
As when the winds, from different quarters, urge  
The tempest on our shore: secure, the cliffs  
Repel its idle rage, and pour it back,  
In broken billows, foaming to the main.

*Alf.* How shall she, Hermit, gain these glorious ends?

*Her.* By silent wisdom, whose informing power  
Works unperceiv'd: that seems in council slow;  
But, when resolv'd, and ripe for execution,  
That parts like lightning from the secret gloom:  
By ever seizing the right *point of view*,  
Her truest interest; which she firm pursues,  
With steady patience, thro the maze of state,  
The storm of opposition, the mixt views,  
And thwarting manag'd passions of mankind:  
By healing the divisions of her people,  
And sowing that fell pest among her foes:  
By saving, from the vermin of a court,  
Her treasure; which, when fair occasion calls,

She

She knows to lavish, in protecting arts,  
 In guarding nations, and in nursing states :  
 By calling up to power, and public life,  
 Each virtue, each ability : yet *she*,  
 Amid the various worthies glowing round her,  
 Still shines the first ; the central sun that wakes,  
 That rules their every motion : not the slave,  
 And passive property of her own creatures.  
 But the great soul that animates her reign,  
 That lights it to perfection, is the love,  
 The confidence unbounded, which her wisdom,  
 Her probity and justice, shall inspire  
 Into the public breast. Hence cordial faith,  
 Which nought can shake ; hence unexhausted treasure :  
 And hence, above all mercenary force,  
 The hand that by the freeborn heart is rais'd,  
 And guards the blended weal of Prince and People.  
 She too shall raise *Britannia's* naval power ;  
 Shall greatly ravish, from insulting *Spain*,  
 The world-commanding sceptre of the deep.

*Eltra.* O matchless queen ! O glory of her sex !  
 The great idea, father, fills my soul,  
 And bids it glow beyond a woman's passions.

*Spirit of WILLIAM III. arises.*

*Her.* Once more, O *Alfred*, raise thine eyes, and mark,  
 Who next adorns the scene, yon laurel'd *shade*.  
 Ere yet the age that clos'd this female reign  
 Hath led around its train of circling years,  
 Shall *Britain* on the verge of ruin stand.  
 A monarch, lost to greatness, to renown,  
 The slave of dreaming monks, shall fill her throne.  
 Weak and aspiring ; fond of lawless rule,  
 The lawless rule his mean ambition covets  
 Unequal to acquire. Yon prince thou saw'st,  
 To glory tutor'd by the hand severe  
 Of sharp Adversity, shall heaven upraise,

And

And injur'd nations with joint call invoke,  
 Their last, their only refuge. Lo! he comes :  
 Wide o'er the billows of the boundless deep  
 His navy rides triumphant : and the shores  
 Of shouting *Albion* echo with his name.  
 Immortal *William* ! from before his face,  
 Flies Superstition, flies oppressive Power,  
 With vile Servility that crouch'd and kiss'd  
 The whip he trembled at. From this great hour  
 Shall *Britain* date her rights and laws restor'd :  
 And one high purpose rule her sovereign's heart ;  
 To scourge the pride of *France*, that foe profess'd  
 To *England* and to Freedom. Yet I see,  
 From distant climes in peaceful triumph borne,  
 Another KING arise ! His early youth  
 With verdant laurel crown'd, for deeds of arms  
 That Reason's voice approves ; for courage, rais'd  
 Beyond all aid from passion, greatly calm !  
 Intrepidly serene ! — In days of peace,  
 Around his throne the human virtues wait,  
 And fair adorn him with their mildest beams ;  
 Good without show, above ambition great ;  
 Wise, equal, merciful, the friend of man !

O *Alfred* ! should thy fate, long ages hence,  
 In meaning scenes recall'd, exalt the joy  
 Of some glad festal day, before a *prince* [ven!  
 Sprung from that king belov'd --- Hear, gracious hea-  
 Thy soft humanity, thy patriot heart,  
 Thy manly virtue, steady, great, resolv'd,  
 Be his supreme ambition ! and with these,  
 The happiness, the glory, that await  
 Thy better days, be shower'd upon his head !

*Alf.* O Hermit ! thou hast rais'd me to new life !  
 New hopes, new triumphs swell my bounding heart—

*Herm.* It comes ! it comes ! — The promis'd scene  
 discloses !

Already the great work of fate begins !

The

# A L F R E D. 183

The mighty wheels are turning, whence will spread,  
Beyond the limits of our narrow world,  
The fair dominions, *Alfred*, of thy sons.  
Behold the warrior bright with *Danish* spoils!--  
The *raven* droops his wings--and hark the trumpet,  
Exulting, speaks the rest.

## S C E N E IV.

*Symphony of martial music.*

ALFRED, ELTRUDA, HERMIT, *Earl of Devon*,  
*followed by soldiers.*

*Alf.* My friend return'd !  
O welcome, welcome ! but what happy tidings  
Smile in thy chearful countenance--

*Dev.* My Liege,  
Your troops have been successful.---But to heaven  
Ascend the praise ! for sure th' event exceeds  
The hand of man.

*Alf.* How was it, noble *Devon* ?

*Dev.* You know my castle is not hence far distant.  
Thither I sped : and in a *Danish* habit  
The trenches passing, by a secret way,  
Known to myself alone, emerg'd at once  
Amid my joyful soldiers. There I found  
A generous few, the veteran, hardy gleanings  
Of many a hapless fight. They with a fierce  
Heroic fire inspirited each other ;  
Resolv'd on death, disdaining to survive  
Their dearest country.---“ If we fall, I cry'd,  
“ Let us not tamely fall like passive cowards ?  
“ No : let us live---or let us die, like men ;  
“ Come on, my friends : to *Alfred* we will cut  
“ Our glorious way ; or, we will nobly perish,

“ Will



“ Will offer to the Genius of our country  
 “ Whole hecatombs of *Danes* .”—As if one soul  
 Had mov’d them all, around their heads they flash’d  
 Their flaming faulchions--“ Lead us to these *Danes*!--  
 “ Our country!—vengeance ! ” was the general cry.  
 Strait on the careless drousy camp we rush’d :  
 And rapid, as the flame devours the stubble,  
 Bore down the heartless *Danes*. With this success  
 Our enterprize increas’d. Not now contented  
 To hew a passage thro the flying herd ;  
 We, unremitting, urg’d a total rout.  
 The valiant *Hubba* bites the bloody field,  
 With twice six hundred *Danes* around him strow’d.

*Alf.* My glorious friend !—this action has restor’d  
 Our sinking country. —What reward can equal  
 A deed so great ?—Is not yon pictur’d *Raven*  
 Their famous magic standard — Emblem fit  
 To speak the savage genius of the people—  
 That oft has scatter’d on our troops dismay,  
 And feeble consternation ?

*Dev.* ‘Tis the same.  
 Wrought by the sisters of the *Danish* king,  
 Of furious *Ivar*, in a midnight hour :  
 While the sick moon, at their enchanted song,  
 Wrapt in a pale tempest, labour’d thro the clouds,  
 The *Demons* of destruction then, they say,  
 Were all abroad, and mixing with the woof  
 Their baleful power : The sisters ever sung ;  
 “ Shake, standard, shake, this ruin on our woes ! ”

*Her.* So these infernal powers, with rays of truth  
 Still deck their fables, to delude who trust them.

*Alf.* But where, my noble cousin, are the rest  
 Of your brave Troops ?

*Dev.* On t’other side the stream,  
 That half incloses this retreat, I left them.  
 Rous’d from the fear, with which it was congeal’d



As in a frost, the country pours amain.  
 The spirit of our ancestors is up,  
 The spirit of the Free ! and with a voice  
 That breathes success, they all demand their king.

*Alf.* Quick, let us join them, and improve their ardor:  
 We cannot be too hasty to secure  
 The glances of occasion.

S C E N E *the last.*

*To them* CORIN, EMMA, *kneeling to* ALFRED.

*Cor.* Good my Liege,  
 Pardon the poor unequal entertainment,  
 Which we, unknowing—

*Alf.* Rise, my honest shepherd.  
 I came to thee a peasant, not a prince :  
 Thy rural entertainment was sincere,  
 Plain hospitable, kind : such as, I hope,  
 Will ever mark the manners of this nation.  
 You friendly lodg'd me, when by all deserted ;  
 And shall have ample recompence.

*Cor.* One boon,  
 Is all I crave.

*Alf.* Good shepherd, speak thy wish.

*Cor.* Permission, in your wars, to serve your Grace:  
 For tho' here lost in solitary shades :

A simple swain, I bear an *English* heart :  
 A heart that burns with rage to see those *Danes*,  
 Those foreign ruffians, those inhuman pirates,  
 Oft our inferiors prov'd, thus lord it o'er us.

*Alf.* Brave countryman, come on. 'Tis such as  
 thou,

Who from affection serve, and free-born zeal,  
 To guard whate'er is dear and sacred to them,  
 That are a king's best honor and defence.

EMMA

EMMA sings the following S O N G.

1.

*If those, who live in shepherd's bower,  
Press not the rich and stately bed :  
The new-mown hay and breathing flower  
A softer couch beneath them spread.*

2.

*If those, who sit at shepherd's board,  
Soothe not their taste by wanton art ;  
They take what nature's gift afford,  
And take it with a chearful heart.*

3.

*If those, who drain the shepherd's bowl,  
No high and sparkling wine can boast ;  
With wholesome cups they chear the soul,  
And crown them with a village toast.*

4.

*If those, who join in shepherd's sport,  
Gay-dancing on the daisy'd ground,  
Have not the splendor of a court ;  
Yet love adorns the merry round.*

*Alf.* My lov'd Eltruda ! thou shalt here remain,  
With gentle Emma, and this reverend hermit.  
Ye silver streams, that murmuring wind around  
This dusky spot, to you I trust my all !  
O close around her, woods ! for her, ye vales,  
Throw forth your flowers, your softest lap diffuse !  
And Thou ! whose secret and expansive hand  
Moves all the springs of this vast universe :  
Whose government astonishes ; who here,  
In a few hours, beyond our utmost hope,  
Beyond our thought, yet doubting, hast clear'd up  
The storm of fate : preserve what thy kind will,  
Thy hountiful appointment, makes so dear

To

# A L F R E D.

187

To human hearts ! preserve my queen and children !  
Preserve the hopes of *England* ! while I go  
To finish thy great work, and save my country.

*Eltru.* Go, pay the debt of honour to the public.  
If ever woman, *Alfred*, lov'd her husband  
More fondly than herself, I claim that virtue,  
That heart-felt happiness. Yet, by our loves  
I swear, that in a glorious death with thee  
I rather would be wrapt, than live long years  
To charm thee from the rugged paths of honor :  
So much I think thee born for beauteous deeds,  
And the bright course of glory.

*Alf.* Matchless woman !  
Love, at thy voice, is kindled to ambition.  
Be this my dearest triumph, to approve me  
A husband worthy of the best *Eltruda* !

*Herm.* Behold, my lord, our venerable Bard,  
Aged and blind, him whom the Muses favour.  
Yet ere you go, in our lov'd country's praise,  
That noblest theme, hear what his rapture breathes.

## A n O D E.

1.

*When Britain first, at heaven's command,  
Arose from out the azure main ;  
This was the charter of the land,  
And guardian Angels sung this strain :  
" Rule, Britannia, rule the waves ;  
" Britons never will be slaves."*

2.

*The nations, not so blest as thee,  
Must, in their turns, to tyrants fall :  
While thou shalt flourish great and free,  
The dread and envy of them all.  
" Rule, &c."*

3. *Still*

3.

*Still more majestic shalt thou rise,  
More dreadful, from each foreign stroke :  
As the loud blast that tears the skies,  
Serves but to root thy native oak.*

*“ Rule, &c.*

4.

*Thee haughty tyrants ne’er shall tame :  
All their attempts to bend thee down,  
Will but arrouse thy generous flame ;  
But work their woe, and thy renown.*

*“ Rule, &c.*

5.

*To thee belongs the rural reign ;  
Thy cities shall with commerce shine :  
All thine shall be the subject main,  
And every shore it circles thine.*

*“ Rule, &c.*

6.

*The muses, still with freedom found,  
Shall to thy happy coast repair :  
Blest isle ! with matchless beauty crown’d,  
And manly hearts to guard the fair.*

*“ Rule, Britannia, rule the waves :*

*“ Britons never will be slaves.*

*Herm. Alfred, go forth ! lead on the radiant years,  
To thee reveal’d in vision.---Lo ! they rise !  
Lo ! patriots, heroes, sages, croud to birth :  
And bards to sing them in immortal verse !  
I see thy commerce, Britain, grasp the world :  
All nations serve thee ; every foreign flood,  
Subjected pays its tribute to the Thames.  
Thither the golden South obedient pours  
His sunny treasures : thither the soft East  
Her spices, delicacies, gentle gifts :  
And thither his rough trade the stormy North.*

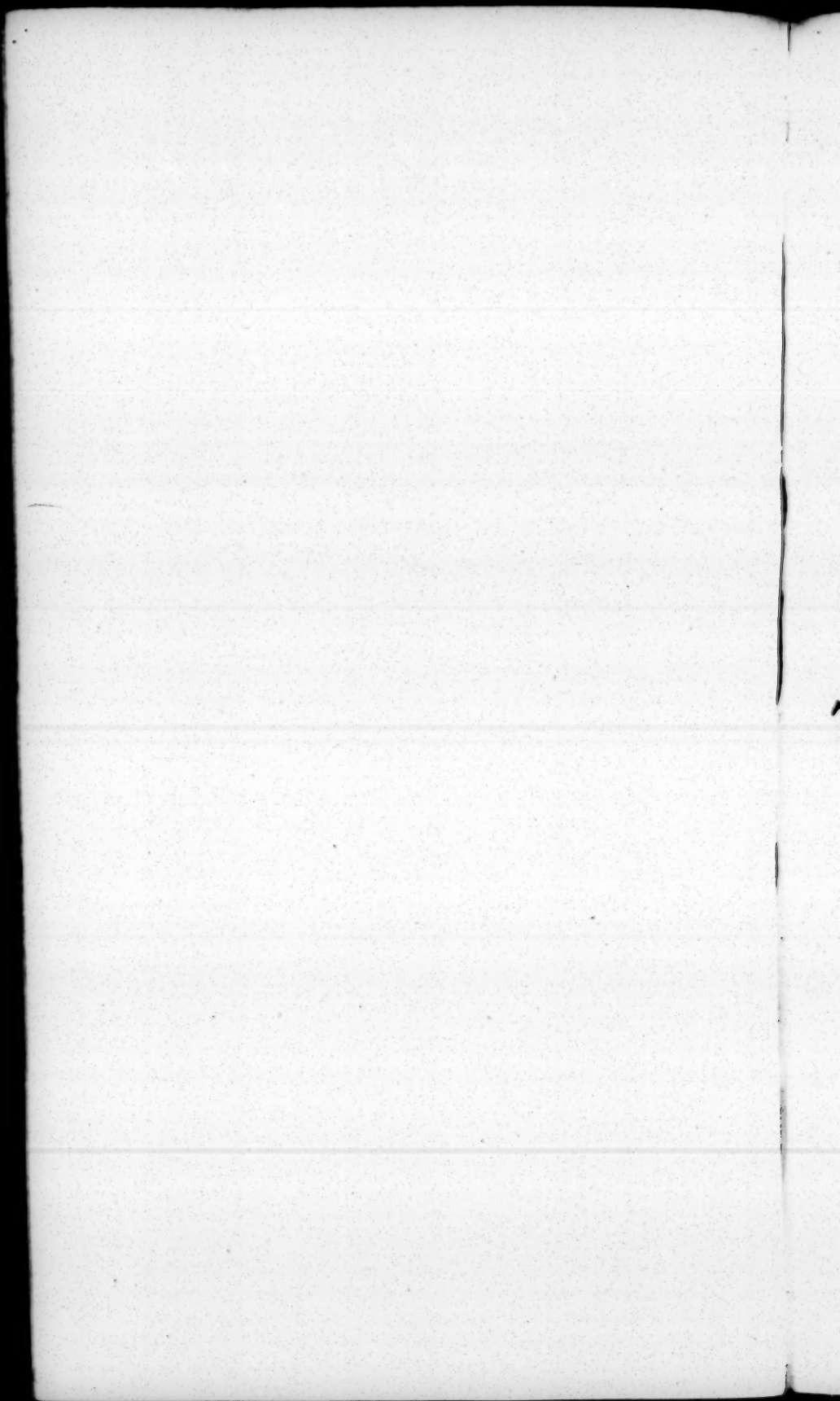
*See,*

See, where beyond the vast *Atlantic* surge,  
By boldest keels untouch'd, a dreadful space !  
Shores yet unfound, arise ! in youthful prime,  
With towering forests, mighty rivers crown'd !  
These stoop to *Britain's* thunder. This new world,  
Shook to its centre, trembles at her name :  
And there her sons, with aim exalted, sow  
The seeds of rising empire, arts, and arms.

*Britons*, proceed, the subject Deep command,  
Awe with your navies every hostile land.  
Vain are their threats, their armies all are vain :  
They rule the balanc'd world, who rule the main.

*Edward*





*Edward and Eleonora*

A

TRAGEDY

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TO HER  
ROYAL HIGHNESS  
THE  
Princess of *Wales*.

MADAM,

IF I take the liberty, once more, to crave the protection of your ROYAL HIGHNESS, for another Tragedy of my writing, it is because I am led, almost unavoidably, to it, by my subject. In the character of ELEONORA I have endeavoured to represent, however faintly, a PRINCESS distinguish'd for all the virtues that render greatness amiable. I have aimed, particularly, to do justice to her inviolable affection and generous tenderness for a PRINCE, who was the darling of a great and free people.

Their descendants, even now, will own, with pleasure, how properly this address is made to your ROYAL HIGHNESS. I am with the profoundest respect,

MADAM,  
YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS'S  
*Most Humble, and*  
*Most devoted Servant,*  
JAMES THOMSON.

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# PROLOGUE

By a FRIEND.

**I**N former Times, when fierce religious rage,  
And priestly sway deform'd each suffering age,  
All manly wit, all useful learning lay  
In darkness lost, nor hop'd returning day.  
Religion then was slain'd by cruel deeds :  
And free-born Reason stoop'd to craft and creeds.  
But happier we ! And tho to-night we show  
What fatal ills from blind devotion flow,  
'Tis not that we such rage renew'd can fear,  
Or dread the hand of persecution here—  
Our scene would wide humanity impart ;  
Would breathe extensive candour thro the heart ;  
Show true religion even to error kind,  
And claim the perfect freedom of the mind.

If too the poet paint a noble strife  
'Twixt the fond husband and the generous wife ;  
If all the father in his voice complains,  
And all the mother in her tender strains ;  
If these best passions prompt the pleasing woe,  
Indulge it freely——Nature bids it show :  
Where parent Nature leads, you cannot stray ;  
And what she wills, 'tis virtue to obey.

Fond of BRITANNIA's fame, and just to YOU,  
He bids old English honour live anew,  
And call's your great first EDWARD up to view.  
But if his Line too weak, his stroke too faint,  
The graceful figure, in full light, to paint ;  
In candid part his honest meaning take,  
And spare the poet for the hero's sake.



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# EPILOGUE.

By a FRIEND.

**T**Hese Poets are such fools!—The man behind,  
Who wrote this play—a simple soul, I find,  
Believes with all his heart, there was a wife,  
Who needs would die—to save a husband's life!  
He in the printed chronicles has read it:  
And true it is——Sir Richard Baker said it.

Why what an ass these books do make a man?  
Read nature——then believe it—you who can.  
Look round this town—the question is not—whether  
Spouse dies for spouse: but who will live together?  
Of old, they say a husband was a lover:  
But, thank our stars! those foolish days are over:  
To such substantial prudence are we come,  
We wed not heart to heart—but plumb to plumb.  
What sense? what beauty? are not now the things:  
But can he settle—up to what she brings?

Yet in this easy, all-forgiving age,  
Bear with such moral fooleries—on the stage.  
Perhaps too, there may be some gentle soul,  
Who rather likes to weep—than win a vole;  
Who thinks that there are charms in generous love,  
And would to Edward Eleonora prove.

## The P E R S O N S.

|                                        |                      |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------|
| EDWARD, Prince of <i>England</i> .     | Mr. <i>Delane</i> .  |
| Earl of GLOSTER.                       | Mr. <i>Rosco</i> .   |
| THEALD, Archdeacon of <i>Liege</i> .   | Mr. <i>Roberts</i> . |
| SELIM, Sultan of <i>Jaffa</i> .        | Mr. <i>Ryan</i> .    |
| ELEONORA, Princess of <i>England</i> . | Mrs. <i>Horton</i> . |
| DARAXA, an <i>Arabian</i> Princess.    | Mrs. <i>Hallam</i> . |

*Affassin, Officers, &c.*

S C E N E, EDWARD's tent in the camp before  
Jaffa, a city on the coast of Palestine.

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# *Edward and Eleonora*

A

# TRAGEDY.

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## ACT I. SCENE I.

Prince EDWARD, THEALD Archdeacon of Leige,  
Earl of GLOSTER.

EDWARD.

I Will no longer doubt. 'Tis plain, my friends,  
That with our little band of *English* troops,  
By all allies all western powers deserted,  
All but the noble knights that guard this land,  
The flower of *Europe* and of Christian valour,  
Nought can be done, nought worthy of our cause,  
Worthy of *England's* heir, and of the name  
Of *Lion-hearted* RICHARD ; whose renown,  
After almost a century elaps'd,  
Shakes through its wide extent this eastern world.  
What else could bend the *Saracen* to peace,  
Who might, with better policy, refuse  
To grant it us? yes, to the prince of *Jassa*

I will accord the peace he has demanded :  
 And tho my troops, impatient, wait the signal  
 To storm yon walls, yet will I not expose,  
 In vain attempts, valour that should be sav'd  
 For better days, and for the public welfare.  
 Rash fruitless war, from wanton glory wag'd,  
 Is only splendid murder—What says *Theald* ?  
 Approves my reverend father of my purpose ?

*The. Edward*, illustrious heir of *England's* crown,  
 I must indeed be blinded with the zeal  
 Of this our holy cause, to think your arms,  
 Thus all-forfaken, thus betray'd, sufficient  
 To reach the grandeur of your first design,  
 And, from the yoke of infidels, to free  
 The sacred city, object of our vows ;  
 Yet this, methinks, this *Jaffa* might be seiz'd :  
 That still were something, an auspicious omen  
 Of future conquest—But, unskill'd in war,  
 To you, my lord, and *Gloster's* wife experience,  
 I this submit.

*Edw.* Speak, *Gloster*, your advice,  
 Before I fix my latest resolution.

*Gloster*. You know, my lord, I never was a friend  
 To this crusado. My unchang'd advice  
 Is strenuous still for peace. Nor this, I urge,  
 From our deserted arms, and cause betray'd,  
 But from the state of our unhappy country.  
 Behold her, *Edward*, with a filial eye,  
 And say, is this a time for these adventures ?  
 Behold her then with deep commotion shook,  
 Beneath a false delusive face of quiet :  
 Behold her bleeding yet from civil war,  
 Exhausted, sunk ; drain'd by ten thousand arts  
 Of lawless imposition, priestly fraud,  
*Italian* leeches, and insatiate *Rome* ;  
 That never rag'd before with such gross insult,

With

With such abandon'd avarice. Besides,  
 Who knows what evil counsellors, again,  
 Are gather'd round the throne ! In times like these,  
 Disturb'd, and lowring with unsettled freedom,  
 One step to lawless power, one bold attempt  
 Renew'd, the least infringement of our charters,  
 Would in the giddy nation raise a tempest.  
 Return my prince. You have already sav'd  
 Your father from his foes, from haughty *Leister* :  
 Now save him from his ministers, from those  
 Who hold him captive in the worst of chains—

*Edw.* You, *Gloster*, sav'd us both.

*Gloster*.

I did my duty ;

Even while I join'd with *Leister*, did my duty—  
 I hope I did—He, who contends for freedom,  
 Can ne'er be justly deem'd his sovereign's foe :  
 No, 'tis the wretch that tempts him to subvert it,  
 The soothing slave, the traitor in the bosom,  
 Who best deserves that name ; he is a worm  
 That eats out all the happiness of kingdoms.

*Edward*, return ; lose not a day, an hour,  
 Before this city. Tho your cause be holy,  
 Believe me, 'tis a much more pious office,  
 To save your father's old and broken years,  
 His mild and easy temper, from the snares  
 Of low corrupt insinuating traytors :  
 A nobler office far ! on the firm base  
 Of well proportion'd liberty, to build  
 The common quiet, happiness and glory,  
 Of king and people, *England's* rising grandeur.  
 To you, my prince, this task, of right, belongs.  
 Has not the royal heir a juster claim  
 To share his father's inmost heart and counsels,  
 Than aliens to his int'rest, those, who make  
 A property, a market of his honour ?



One reason more allow me to suggest  
 For peace, immediate peace--should blind misfortune  
 In this far distant hostile land, oppress us ;  
 A chance to which our weakness stands expos'd :  
 What, *Edward*, of thy princess would become,  
 Thy *Eleonora* ; she, whose tender love  
 Thro' stormy seas, and in fierce camps attends thee ?  
 What of thy blooming offspring ? charg'd with these,  
 To give our courage scope were cruel rashness.

*Edw.* Enough, my lord, I stand resolv'd on peace;  
 And will to *England* strait—But where, alas,  
 Where shall we cover our inglorious heads ;  
 When gay with hope the people round us press,  
 To hear by what exploits we have sustain'd  
 The fame of *Richard*, and of *English* valour ?  
 Shall I, my generous country, I be rank'd  
 With those weak princes, who consume thy wealth,  
 And sink thy name in idle expeditions ?  
 Perfidious *France* ! Be this the ruling point  
 Of my whole life and passion of my soul,  
 To humble thee, proud nation !—Meantime, *Gloster*,  
 See that the captive princess be restor'd,  
*Demaxa* to the Sultan of this city,  
 Whose bride she is—We wage not war with women.

## SCENE II.

EDWARD, THEALD, GLOSTER,  
*An Officer belonging to the Prince.*

*Off.* One from the prince of *Jassa*, Sir, demands  
 Your secret ear on some important message.

*Edw.* Conduct him to my tent — (*Officer goes out.*)

He brings, I judge,  
 The Sultan's last instructions for this peace.  
 Here wait : I may your faithful counsel want.

SCENE

## SCENE III.

THEALD, GLOSTER.

*The.* Whatever woes, of late, have clouded *England*;  
Yet must I, *Gloster*, call that nation happy,  
On whose horizon smiles a dawning prince  
Of *Edward's* worth and virtues.

*Gloſt.* True, my friend ;  
*Edward* has great, has amiable virtues,  
That virtue chiefly which befits a prince :  
He loves the people he must one day rule ;  
With fondness loves them, with a noble pride ;  
Esteems their good, esteems their glory his.  
One instance it becomes me to recount,  
That shows the genuine greatness of his soul.  
Tho I have met him in the bloody field,  
He fighting for his father, I for freedom ;  
Yet bears his bosom no remaining grudge  
Of those distracted times : to me his heart  
Is greatly reconcil'd—Virtue ! beyond  
The little unforgiving soul of tyrants !

Now will I tell thee, *Theald*, whence I stoop  
To wear the gaudy chains of court-attendance,  
At these grey years ; that should in calm retirement  
Pass the soft evening of a bustling life,  
And plume my parting soul for better worlds.  
Amidst his many virtues, youthful *Edward*  
Is lofty, warm, and absolute of temper :  
I therefore seek to moderate his heat,  
To guide his fiery virtues, that, misled  
By dazzling power and flattering sycophants,  
Might finish what his father's weaker measures  
Have try'd in vain. And hence I here attend him,  
In expeditions which I ne'er approv'd,

In holy wars—your pardon, reverend father—  
 I must declare I think such wars the fruit  
 Of idle courage or mistaken zeal,  
 Sometimes of rapine and religious rage,  
 To every mischief prompt.

*The.* You wrong, my lord,  
 You wrong them much. To set this matter only  
 Upon a civil footing: say, what right  
 Had robbers rushing from *Arabian* deserts,  
 Fierce as the suns that kindled up their rage,  
 Thus, in a barbarous torrent, to bear down  
 All *Asia*, *Africa*, and profane their altars?  
 And to repel brute force by force is just.  
 Nay, does not even our duty, int'rest, glory,  
 The common honour of the Christian name,  
 Require us to repress their wild ambition,  
 That labours westward still, and threatens *Europe*?

*Gloft.* Yes, when they burst their limits, let us check  
 them:

And with a firmer hand than those loose Christians,  
 The most corrupt and abject of mankind,  
 Slaves, doubly slaves, who suffer'd these *Arabians*,  
 In virtue their superiors as in valour,  
 Without resistance to o'er-run the world.  
 By rage and zeal, 'tis true, their empire rose:  
 But now some settled ages of possession  
 Create a right, than which, I fear, few nations  
 Can shew a better. Sure I am 'tis madness,  
 Inhuman madness, thus, from half the world,  
 To drain its blood and treasure, to neglect  
 Each art of peace, each care of government;  
 And all for what? By spreading desolation,  
 Rapine and slaughter o'er the other half,  
 To gain a conquest we can never hold.

I venerate this land. Those sacred hills,  
 Those vales, those cities, trod by saints and prophets,  
 By God himself, the scenes of heavenly wonders,  
 Inspire

Inspire me with a certain awful joy.  
 But the same God, my friend, pervades, sustains,  
 Surrounds and fills this universal frame ;  
 And every land where spreads his vital presence,  
 His all-enlivening breath, to me is holy.

Excuse me, *Theald*, if I go too far :  
 I meant alone to say, I think these wars  
 A kind of persecution. And when that,  
 That most absurd and cruel of all vices,  
 Is once begun, where shall it find an end ?  
 Each in his turn, or has or claims a right  
 To wield its dagger, to return its furies ;  
 And, first or last, they fall upon our selves.

EDWARD, *behind the Scenes*.

Inhuman villain ! is thy message murder !

*Thea*. Ha ! heard you not the prince exclaiming—  
 murder ?

*Gloft*. Should this Barbarian messenger.

*(Moving towards the noise.*

'Tis so !

#### SCENE IV.

THEALD, GLOSTER ; to them prince EDWARD  
*wounded in the arm, and dragging in the assassin.*

*Ed*. Detested wretch ! And does the prince of *Jassa*  
 Send base assassins to transact his treaties ?

There—take thy answer ruffian !

*(Stabs him with the dagger he had wrested from him..*

Blow to hasty !

I should have sav'd thee for a fitter death.

*Ass*. I would have triumph'd, Christian, in thy rage.  
 For know, thou vile destroyer of the faithful !

That tho my erring dagger mis'd thy heart,

Yet has it fir'd thy veins with mortal poison,

Whose very touch is death—ALLAH be prais'd !

O glorious fate ! prophet, receive my soul ! *(Dies.*

EDWARD



EDWARD, *after a short pause.*

Why gaze you with amazement on each other?  
Are we not men, to whom the various chances  
Of life are known?

*Gloſt.* Ha! poison! did he say?  
Then is at once my prince and country lost!  
O fatal wound to *England*!

*Thea.* Quick, my lord,  
Retire and have it dress'd, without delay;  
Ere the fell poison can diffuse its rage,  
And deeply taint your blood.

*Edw.* The princess comes!  
O save me from her tenderness!

## SCENE V.

EDWARD, THEALD, GLOSTER; *to them the princess*  
ELEONORA.

*Eleo.* My Edward!  
Support me!—Oh!

*Edw.* She faints—My *Eleonora*!  
Look up, and bless me with thy gentle eyes!—  
The colour comes, her cheeks resume their beauty,  
And all her charms revive—Hence, spurn that carcass:  
A sight too shocking for my *Eleonora*.

*Eleo.* And lives my Edward, lives my dearest lord,  
From this assassin sav'd?—Alas! you bleed!

*Edw.* 'Tis nought, my lovely princess—A slight  
wound—

*Eleo.* But, ah! methought, I entering heard of poison.  
Tainting the blood—What! was the dagger poi-  
son'd?—

Ha! silent all? will none relieve my fears?—

*Gloſt.* Madam, restrain your tenderness a moment—  
The prince delays too long—Let him retire.  
Meanwhile, the troubled camp shall be my care:  
Lest the base foe should make a sudden sally,  
While



While yet our troops are stun'd with the disaster.

*Edw.* I thank thee, noble *Gloster*. Nor, alone  
Support my troops ; go rouse them to revenge ;  
Tell them their injur'd prince will try their love,  
Their valour soon—And you, my friend, good *Theald*,  
Attend the princess—Chear thee, *Eleonora* !  
I cannot, will not, leave thee long, to vex  
Thy tender soul with aggravated fears.

*Thea.* Behold *Daraxa*, the false Sultan's bride.

## SCENE VI.

ELEONORA, THEALD, DARAXA.

*Dar.* Princess of *England*, let me share thy grief.  
Whence flow these tears ? and what this wild alarm,  
This noise of murder and assassination ?

*Elec.* Alas ! the prince is wounded by a ruffian ;  
And with a poison'd dagger, as I fear.  
Yet none will ease me of this racking thought—  
Nay, tell me, *Theald*, since to know the worst  
Is oft a kind of miserable comfort ;  
What has befall'n the prince ? For this slight wound  
Could never thus o'ercast the brave with terror.

*Thea.* I dare not, princess, dally with your fate.  
An impious villain, from the Sultan *Selim*,  
Pretended to the prince a secret message,  
About the peace in treaty. Dreading nought,  
He left us here, and to his tent retir'd,  
There to receive this execrable envoy.  
Strait with the prince alone, the fierce assassin  
Attempted on his life ; but, in his arm,  
He took, it seems, the blow, and from the villain  
Wresting the dagger, plung'd it to his heart.  
This last we saw, and heard the inhuman bigot,  
Who deem'd himself a martyr in their cause,

Boast,

Boast, as he dy'd, the prince's wound was poison'd—

*Eleo.* Then all I fear'd is true! then am I wretched,  
Beyond even hope!

*Dar.* A villain from the Sultan!

*Eleo.* Ah the distracting thought! And is my life!  
My love! my *Edward!* on the brink of fate!  
Of fate that may this moment snatch him from me!

*Dar.* What! *Selim* send assassins? and beneath  
A name so sacred? *Selim*, whose renown  
Is incense breathing o'er the sweeten'd east;  
For each humane, each generous virtue fam'd;  
*Selim!* the rock of faith! and sun of honour!

*Eleo.* O complicated woe! The Christian cause  
Has now no more a patron, and restorer;  
*England* no more a prince, in whom she plac'd  
Her glory, her delight, her only hope;  
These desolated troops no more a chief;  
No more a husband, a protector, I,  
A friend, a lover! and my helpless children—  
No more a father!

*Dar.* Pardon, gentle princess,  
If in this whirlwind of revolving passions,  
That snatch my soul by turns, I have forgot  
To pay the tribute which I owe thy sorrows—  
But I myself, alas! am more unhappy!

*Eleo.* What woes can equal mine? who lose, thus  
vilely,

The best! the bravest! loveliest of mankind!—

*Dar.* You only *lose* the man you love, but I,  
O insupportable! must learn to *hate*,  
To *scorn* what once was all my pride and transport!  
Should *Edward* die by this accursed crime,  
(Which heaven forbid) he dies admir'd, belov'd,  
In the full bloom of fame and spotless honour.  
To you the daughter of illustrious grief,  
Your tears remain, and sadly-sweet reflection;  
You with his image, with his virtues, still,

Amidst

Amidst the pensive gloom, may converse hold :  
 While I—Ah ! nothing meets my blasted sight  
 But a black view of infamy and horror !  
 What is the loss of life to loss of virtue !—  
 And yet how can this heavenly spark be lost ?  
 No ! virtue burns with an immortal flame.  
 He is bely'd—some villain has abus'd him.

*Thea.* I honour, madam, this your virtuous grief :  
 But that the Sultan did employ th' assassin  
 Is past all doubt—Behold the false instructions,  
 By which he gain'd admittance.

*(Giving her the letter the prince had dropt.)*

*Dar.*

Ha ! —'Tis so !

His hand ! his seal ! From my detesting heart,  
 I tear him thus for ever !—Perish, *Selim* !  
 Perish the feeble wretch, who more bewails him !  
 That were to share his guilt !—Unhappy princess !  
 Now let me turn my soul to thy assistance—  
 There is a cure, 'tis true—

*Eleo.*

A cure, *Daraxa* !

O say, what cure ?

*Dar.*

No ; it avails not madam ;

None can be found to risque it.

*Eleo.*

None to risque it ?

Quick tell me what it is, my dear *Daraxa*.

*Dar.* To find some person, that, with friendly lip,  
 May draw the poison forth ; at least, its rage  
 And mortal spirit. This will bring the wound  
 Within the power of art : but certain death  
 Attends the generous deed.

ELEONORA, *knelling*.

Then hear me, heaven !

Prime source of love ! Ye saints and angels, hear me !  
 I here devote me for the best of men,  
 Of princes and of husbands. On this cross  
 I seal the cordial vow : confirm it heaven !

And

And grant me courage in the hour of trial !

*The.* O tenderness unequal'd !

*Dar.* Glorious princess !

*Elco.* Go, *Theald*, quickly find the earl of *Gloster*,  
And with him break this matter to the prince.

As for the person, leave that task to me.

I with *Daraxa* will your call attend ;

O all ye powers of love, your influence lend.

## ACT II. SCENE I.

GLOSTER, THEALD.

GLOSTER.

**N**O, *Theald*, no ; he never will consent----  
I know him well ; he ne'er will purchase life,  
At such a rate : besides, in aid of love,  
His generous pride would come, and deem it baseness.

*The.* Then is yon sun his last. The blackning wound  
Begins already to confess the poison---  
Meantime, my lord, both friendship and our duty  
Demand, at least, the trial. Well I know,  
That, poise his life with hers, he would as nothing  
Esteem his own : but sure the life of thousands,  
The mingled cause at once of heaven and earth,  
Should o'er the best the dearest life prevail.

*Glofi.* Alas ! my friend, you reason, *Edward* loves.  
How weak the head contending with the heart !  
Yet be the trial made—Behold he comes.

SCENE



## SCENE II.

EDWARD, GLOSTER, THEALD.

EDWARD, *entering*.

O thou bright sun ! now hast'ning to those climes,  
That parent-isle, which I no more shall see ;  
And for whose welfare oft my youthful heart  
Has vainly form'd so many a fond design ;  
O thither bear, resplendent orb of day,  
To that dear spot of earth, my last farewell !

And oh ! eternal providence, whose course,  
Amidst the various maze of life, is fix'd  
By boundless wisdom and by boundless love,  
I follow thee, with resignation, hope,  
With confidence and joy ; for thou art good,  
And of thy rising goodness is no end !

Well met, my dearest friends ! --- It was too true  
The villain's threatening, and I nearly touch  
That awful hour which every man must prove,  
Yet every man still shifts at distance from him.  
Come then, and let us fill the space between  
These last important moments, whence we take  
Our latest tincture for eternity,  
With solemn converse and exalting friendship--  
Nay --- *Theald* --- *Gloster* --- wound me not with tears,  
With tears that fall o'er venerable cheeks !  
What could the princess more ? --- Ah ! there, indeed,  
At every thought of her, I feel a weight,  
A dreadful weight of tenderness, that shakes  
My firmest resolution --- Where is she ?

*The.* She burns with fond impatience to attend you.

*Ed.* And how, brave *Gloster*, did you leave the camp ?

*Gloster.* The camp, sir, is secure : each soldier there  
From indignation draws new force and spirit.

O 'tis



O 'tis a glorious, an affecting sight!  
 Those furrow'd cheeks that never knew before  
 The dew of tears, now in a copious shower  
 Are bath'd. Around your tent they, anxious, crowd,  
 Rank over rank: some pressing for a look;  
 Some sadly musing, with dejected eye;  
 Some, on their knees, preferring vows to heaven;  
 And, with extended arm, some breathing vengeance.  
 "Base *Saracens*, they cry, perfidious cowards!  
 "But blood shall wash out blood--Ah! poor atonement,  
 "Did the whole bleeding city fall a victim!"

*Edw.* Alas, that to repay their faithful love  
 I cannot live!--Yet moderate their zeal;  
 And let the sword of justice only strike  
 The faithless *Selim*, and his guilty council.  
 My new-departed spirit, just escap'd  
 From the low fev'rish passions of this life,  
 Would grieve to see the blood of innocence  
 With that of guilt confounded, stain my tomb.

*Thea.* Permit me, sir, the hope, that you yourself--  
 I speak it on just cause--may live to punish  
 This breach of all the sacred rights of men.

*Edw.* Why will you turn my thoughts, from earth en-  
 To soft enfeebling views of life again? [larg'd.

*Thea.* Not to a vain desire of life, my lord,  
 I would recal them; but inspire each hope,  
 Advise each possibility to save it.  
 And there is yet a remedy.

*Edw.* Delusion!

*Thea.* The fair *Arabian* princess mention'd one.

*Ed.* She one!--*Daraxa*!--something to compleat  
 Her lover's crime.

*Thea.* You could not wrong her thus;  
 Had you beheld the tempest of her soul,  
 Her grief, her rage, confusion, when she heard  
 Of *Selim's* baseness; had you seen that honour,  
 That

That glorious fire which darted from her eyes ;  
Till in a flood of virtuous sorrow sunk  
She almost equal'd *Eleonora's* tears.

*Edw.* What was it she propos'd ?

*Thea.* It was, my lord,  
To find some person, who, with friendly lip,  
Might draw the deadly spirit—

*Edw.* I have heard  
Of such a cure ; but is it not, good *Theald*,  
An action fatal to the kind performer ?

*Thea.* Yes, surely fatal.

*Edw.* Name it then no more.  
I should despise the paltry life it purchas'd.  
Besides, what mortal can dispose so rashly  
Of his own life ? Talk not of low condition,  
And of my public rank : when life or death  
Becomes the question, all distinctions vanish ;  
Then the first monarch and the lowest slave  
On the same level stand, in this the sons  
Of equal nature all.

*Thea.* Allow me, Sir.  
If 'tis a certain, an establish'd duty,  
Than duty more, the height of human virtue,  
To sacrifice a transitory life  
For that kind source from whence it is deriv'd,  
And all its guarded joys, our dearest country ;  
It may be justly sacrific'd for those  
On whom depends the welfare of the public.  
And there is one, my lord, who stands devoted,  
By solemn and irrevocable vows,  
To die for you.

*Edw.* To die for me !---Kind nature !  
Thanks to thy forming hand, I can myself,  
Chearful, sustain to pay this debt I owe thee,  
Without the borrow'd sufferings of another.  
No, *Theald*, urge this argument no more.

I love

I love not life to that degree, to purchase,  
 By the sure death of some brave guiltless friend,  
 A few uncertain days, that often rise,  
 Like this, serene and gay, when, with swift wing,  
 A moment wraps them in disastrous fate.

*Gloft.* Did we consult to save your single life,  
 Was that the present question, thy refusal  
 Were just, were generous. But, my lord, this person,  
 Who stands for you devoted, should, in that,  
 Be deem'd devoted for the christian cause,  
 The common cause of *Europe* and thy country ;  
 Dies for the brave companions of thy fortune,  
 Who weeping now around thy tent conjure thee  
 To live for them, and *England's* promis'd glory.  
 O save our country, *Edward* ! save a nation,  
 The chosen land, the last retreat of freedom,  
 Amidst a world enslav'd !---Cast back thy view,  
 And trace from farthest times her old renown.  
 Think of the blood that, to maintain her rights,  
 And guard her sheltering laws, has flow'd in battle,  
 Or on the patriot's scaffold. Think what cares,  
 What vigilance, what toils, what bright contention,  
 In councils, camps, and well-disputed senates,  
 It cost our generous ancestors, to raise  
 A matchless plan of freedom : whence we shine,  
 Even in the jealous eye of hostile nations,  
 The happiest of mankind.—Then see all this,  
 This virtue, wisdom, toil and blood of ages,  
 Behold it ready to be lost for ever.

In this important, this decisive hour,  
 On thee, and thee alone, our weeping country  
 Turns her distressful eye ; to thee she calls,  
 And with a helpless parent's piercing voice.  
 Wilt thou not live for her ? for her subdue  
 A graceful pride, I own, but still a pride,  
 That more becomes thy courage and thy youth

Than

Than birth and publick station? Nay, for her,  
Say, wouldst thou not resign the dearest passions?

*Edw.* O there is nothing, which for thee, my country,  
I, in my proper person, could not suffer!  
But thus to sculk behind another's life,  
'Tis what I have not courage to support,  
It makes a kind of coward of me, *Gloster*.  
But let me see this friend, whose generous virtue  
Exceeds what even my favourable thoughts  
Had imag'd in the selfish race of man.  
The purpose claims the merit of the deed;  
And ere I die I must requite his friendship.  
Conduct him hither, *Theald*.

## S C E N E III.

EDWARD, GLOSTER.

*Edw.* Ah, my *Gloster*,  
You have not touch'd on something that here pleads  
For longer life, beyond the force of reason,  
Perhaps too powerful pleads---my *Eleonora*!  
To thee, my friend, I will not be ashamed  
Even to avow my love in all its fondness.  
For oh there shines in this my dearer self!  
This partner of my soul! such a mild light  
Of careless charms, of unaffected beauty,  
Such more than beauty, such endearing goodness,  
That when I meet her eye, where cordial faith,  
And every gentle virtue mix their lustre,  
I feel a transport that partakes of anguish!  
How shall I then behold her, on the point  
To leave her, *Gloster*, in a distant land?  
For ever in a stormy world to leave her?  
There is no misery to be fear'd like that  
Which from our greatest happiness proceeds!

S C E N E



## SCENE IV.

EDWARD, GLOSTER, THEALD *presenting the princess*  
ELEONORA *as the person he went to bring*, DARAXA.

*Ed.* O heaven!--what do I see?--I am betray'd--  
[*Turning away.*]

*Eleo.* Edward!

*Edw.* O'tis too much! O spare me, nature!

*Eleo.* Not, look upon me, *Edward*?

*Edw.* *Eleonora!*

How on this dreadful errand canst thou come?

*Eleo.* Behold me kneel-----

*Edw.* Why kneel you, best of women!

You ne'er offended, ne'er in thought offended!

Thou art all truth, and love, and angel goodness!

Why do you kneel? O rise, my *Eleonora*!

*Eleo.* Let me fulfil my vow.

*Edw.* O never! never! ---

*Eleo.* Let me preserve a life, in which is wrapt  
The life of thousands, dearer than my own!

Live thou, and let me die for thee, my *Edward*!

*Edw.* For me!--thy words are daggers to my soul  
And wouldst thou have me then thus meanly save  
A despicable life? a life expos'd

To that worst torment, to my own contempt!

A life still haunted by the cruel image

Of thy last pangs, thy agonizing throws,

The dire convulsions of these tender limbs;

And all for one-- O infamy!--for one,

By love, by duty bound, each manly tie,

Even by a peasant's honour to protect thee?

Yet this, tho' strong, invincible, is nought

To what my wounded tenderness could urge

Against thy dire request---But should fate demand

Th



The life we love, then, then, we must exert  
 The greatest act of human resignation,  
 We must submit. But wouldst thou have me, say,  
 Doom thee myself? with voluntary choice,  
 Nay by a barbarous crime, untimely snatch  
 This worst of ills? Would *Eleonora* make me  
 Of all mankind the most compleatly wretched?

*Eleo.* Plead not the voice of honour. Well I know,  
 There is no danger, pain, no form of death,  
 Thou wouldst not meet with transport to protect me.  
 But I alas! an unimportant woman,  
 Whose only boast and merit is to love thee;  
 Ah, what am I, with nameless numbers weigh'd?  
 With myriads yet unborn? All ranks, all ages,  
 All arts, all virtues, all a state comprizes?  
 These have a higher claim to thy protection.  
 Live then for them.---O make a generous effort!  
 What none but heroes can, bid the soft passions  
 The private stoop to those that grasp the publick.  
 Live to possess the pleasure of a God,  
 To bless a people trusted to thy care.  
 Live to fulfil thy long career of glory,  
 But just begun. To die for thee be mine.  
 I ne'er can find a brighter, happier fate;  
 And fate will come at last, inglorious fate!  
 O grudge me not a portion of thy fame!  
 As join'd in love, O raise me to thy glory!

*Edw.* In vain is all thy eloquence. The more  
 Thou wouldst persuade, I, with encreasing horror,  
 Fly from thy purpose.

*Eleo.* Dost thou love me, *Edward*?

*Ed.* Oh!--If I love thee?--Witness heaven and earth  
 Angels of death that hover round me, witness!  
 Witness these blinded eyes, these trembling arms,  
 This heart that beats unutterable fondness,  
 To what an agony I love thee-----

*Eleo.*

*Eleo.*

Then

Thou sure wilt save me from the worst of pains.

*Edw.* O that I could from all engross thy sufferings!  
Pain felt for thee were pleasure!

*Eleo.*Hear me, *Edward*.

I speak the strictest truth, no flight of passion,  
I speak my naked heart.---To die, I own,  
Is a dread passage, terrible to nature,  
Chiefly to those who have, like me, been happy.---  
But to survive thee---O 'tis greatly worse!  
'Tis a continual death! I cannot bear  
The very thought---O leave me not behind thee!

*Edw.* Since nought can alter my determin'd breast,  
Why dost thou pierce me with this killing image?

*Eleo.* Ah! selfish that thou art! with thee the toil,  
The tedious toil of life will soon be o'er;  
Thou soon wilt hide thee in the quiet grave:  
While I, a lonely widow, with my orphans,  
Am left defenceless to a troubled world,  
A false, ungrateful, and injurious world!---  
Oh! if thou lov'st me, *Edward*, I conjure thee,  
By that celestial flame which blends our souls!  
By all a father, all a mother feels!  
By every holy tenderness, I charge thee!  
Live to protect the pledges of our love,  
Our children!---

*Edw.*

Oh!-----

*Eleo.*

Our young, our helpless---

*Edw.*

Oh!---

Distraction!---Let me go!

*Eleo.*

Nay, drag me with thee---

To the kind tomb-- Thou canst not leave our children!  
Expos'd, by being thine, beyond the lowest!  
Surrounded with the perils of a throne!---

*Edw.* Cruel! no more embitter thus our last,  
Our parting moments! Set no more the terrors

Of

Of these best passions in array against me !  
 For by that power, I swear, father of life !  
 Whose universal love embraces all  
 That breathe this ample air ; whose perfect wisdom  
 Brings light from darkness, and from evil good ;  
 To whom I recommend thee, and my children :  
 By him I swear ! I never will submit  
 To what thy horrid tenderness proposes !

*Gloft.* My lord—

*Edw.* Oh !—these emotions are too much—  
 I feel a heavy languor steal upon me :  
 The working poison clogs the springs of life.  
 Conduct me to my couch—Ah ! *Eleonora* !  
 If we ne'er meet again—This one embrace—  
 Yet sink not to despair—Heaven may preserve me  
 By means superior to all human hope.  
*Eleo.* I will not, cannot quit thee !—

## S C E N E V.

ELEONORA, DARAXA.

*Dar.* Princess, stay.  
 Think not the hand of death is yet upon him,  
 Resistless sleep will first oppress his senses,  
 Before the last convulsive pangs come on ;  
 For so the numbing poison oft begins  
 To spread its dark malignity.—

*Eleo.* Ha !—Sleep ?—  
 Then is the time---Thanks to inspiring heaven !  
 But come, and ere the venom sinks too deep,  
 Swift let me seize the favouring hour of sleep.

*The End of the Second Act.*

## ACT III. SCENE I.

GLOSTER.

O Miracle of love! O wond'rous princess!  
 'Tis such as thou, who keep the gentle flame,  
 That animates society, alive,  
 Who make the dwellings of mankind delightful.  
 What is vain life? an idle flight of days,  
 A still-delusive round of sickly joys,  
 A scene of little cares and trifling passions,  
 If not enobled by such deeds of virtue?  
 And yet this matchless virtue! what avails it?  
 Th' afflicting angel has forsook the prince,  
 And now pours out his terrors on the princess.  
 Forsook him, said I?—No; he must awake  
 To keener evils than the body knows,  
 Which minds alone, and generous minds can feel.  
 O virtue! virtue! as thy joys excel,  
 So are thy woes transcendent, the gross world  
 Knows not the bliss or misery of either—

The prince forsakes his couch—He seems renew'd  
 In health—Ah, short deceitful gleam of ease!

## SCENE II.

EDWARD, GLOSTER.

EDWARD, *advancing from his couch.*

Hail to the fresher earth and brighter day!  
 I feel me lighten'd of the mortal load  
 That lay upon my spirits. This kind sleep  
 Has shed a balmy quiet thro my veins.  
 Whence this amazing change?—

But be my first chief care, author of good!  
 To bend my soul in gratitude to thee!

Thou,



Thou, when blind mortals wander thro the deeps  
Of comfortless despair, with timely hand,  
Invisible, and by unthought-of ways,  
Thus lead'st them forth into thy light again.

*Gloſt.* How fares my lord, the prince ?

*Edw.* To health reſtor'd.

Only a kind of laſſitude remains,  
A not unpleaſing weakneſs hangs upon me :  
Like the ſoft trembling of the ſettled deep,  
After a ſtorm.

*Gloſt.* Father of health be prais'd !

*Edw.* The moment that I ſunk upon my couch,  
A ſick and troubled ſlumber fell upon me ;  
Chaos of gloomy unconnected thought !  
That, in black eddy whirl'd, made ſleep more dreadful  
Than the worſt waking pang. While thus I toſs'd,  
Ready to bid farewel to ſuffering clay,  
Methought an angel came and touch'd my wound.  
At this the parting gloom clear'd up apace ;  
My ſlumbers ſoften'd ; and, with health, return'd  
Serenity of mind, and order'd thought,  
And fair ideas gladdening all the ſoul.  
Aerial muſic too, by fancy heard,  
Sooth'd my late pangs and harmoniz'd my breaſt.  
Thro ſhades of bliſs I walk'd, where heavenly forms  
Sung to their lutes my *Eleonora's* love—  
But where is ſhe ? the glory of her ſex !  
O dearer, juſtly dearer, far than ever !  
Quick, let me find her, pour into her boſom  
My full full ſoul, with tenderneſs o'ercharg'd,  
With glad ſurpriſe, with gratitude and wonder.—

Ha ! why this ſilence ? this dejected look ?  
You caſt a drooping eye upon the ground.  
Where is the princeſs ?

*Gloſt.* She, my lord, repoſes.

*Edw.* Repoſes !—No !—It is not likely, *Gloſter,*



That she would yield her weeping eyes to sleep,  
While I lay there in agonies—away!  
I am too feeble then to know the truth.  
Say, is she well?

*Gloſt.* Now show thy courage, *Edward*—

*Edw.* O all my fears! I shall start out to madness!  
What!—while I slept?

*Gloſt.* Yes —

*Edw.* Misery! distraction!

My peace, my honour is betray'd for ever!  
O love! O shame! O murder'd *Eleonora*!

### SCENE III.

*Gloſt.* Unhappy prince! go find thy *Eleonora*,  
And in heart-easing grief exhale thy passion:  
All other comfort, now, were to talk down  
The winds and raging seas.—But yonder comes  
'Th' *Arabian* princess. From her tears I learn  
The moving scene within.

### SCENE IV.

GLOSTER, DARAXA, *a messenger from SELIM*, attending at some distance.

*Dar.* O! 'tis too much!  
I can no more support it,

*Gloſt.* Generous mourner,  
How is it with the princess *Eleonora*?

*Dar.* Struck by the poison on her couch she lies,  
A rose soft-drooping in *Sabea* vales,  
Beneath the fiery dog-star's noxious rage.  
O Christian chief, I never shall forget  
'The scene these melting eyes have just beheld,  
With mingled tears of tenderness and wonder.

*Gloſt.*

*Gloſt.* How was it, madam ?

*Dar.*

When this pride of women,  
This beſt of wives, which in his radiant courſe  
The ſun beholds, when firſt ſhe, ſickening, felt  
Th' imperious ſummons of approaching fate,  
All rob'd in ſpotleſs white ſhe fought her altars ;  
And, proſtrate there, for her departing ſoul,  
The prince her huſband, and her orphan-children,  
Implor'd th' Eternal Mind.—As yet ſhe held  
Her ſwelling tears, and in her boſom kept  
Her ſighs reſpreſ'd : nor did the near approach  
Of the pale king of terrors dim her beauty ;  
No, rather adding to her charms, it breath'd  
A certain mournful ſweetneſs thro her features.  
But as th' increaſing bane more deſperate grew,  
Wild to her bed ſhe ruſh'd, and then, indeed,  
The lovely fountains of her eyes were open'd,  
Then flow'd her tears.—“Connubial bed, ſhe cry'd,  
“Chaſte witneſs of my tenderneſs for him,  
“To ſave whoſe life I unrepining die  
“In bloom of youth, farewel!—Thou ſhalt, perhaps.  
“Receive a fairer, a more happy bride ;  
“But never a more faithful, never one  
“Who loves her huſband with a ſonder paſſion.”  
Here flow'd her tears aſreſh ; with burning lip  
She preſs'd the humid couch, and wept again.  
At laſt, while weary ſorrow paus'd, ſhe roſe,  
And, fearing leſt immediate death might ſeize her.  
Demanded to be led to ſee the prince ;  
But fear of chaſing from his eyes, too ſoon,  
The ſalutary ſleep that heal'd his pangs,  
Reſtrain'd her trembling footſteps. On her couch,  
Abandon'd to deſpair, ſhe ſunk anew,  
And for her children call'd. Her children came.  
A while, ſupported on her arm, ſhe ey'd them,  
With tears purſuing tears a-down her cheek,

With all the speechless misery of woe —  
I see her still — O God! — the powerful image  
Dissolves me into tears!

*Gloft.* Madam, proceed.  
Such tears are virtue, and excel the joys  
Of wanton pride.

*Dar.* Then starting up she went  
To snatch them to a mother's last embrace;  
When strait reflecting that the piercing poison  
Might taint their tender years, she sudden shrunk  
With horror back— "O wretched *Eleonora*!  
" (She weeping cry'd) and must I then not taste  
" The poor remaining comfort of the dying,  
" To see a husband, clasp my dearest children,  
" And mix my parting soul with theirs I love?  
Her sad attendants, that till then had mourn'd  
In silent sorrow, all, at This, gave way  
To loud laments—She rais'd her languid eye,  
And casting on them round a gracious smile,  
'To each by name she call'd, even to the lowest,  
'To each extended mild her friendly hand,  
Gave, and, by turns, receiv'd a last farewell.  
Such is the dreadful scene from which I come.

*Gloft.* How heighten'd now with *Edward's* mingled  
woes!

Why are my lingering years reserv'd for this?

*Dar.* Come nearer, you, the messenger of *Selim*,  
And bear him back this answer—His chief aim,  
He says, in stooping to solicit peace,  
Was from the chains of infidels to save me.  
What! was it then to rescue me he sent,  
Beneath an all-rever'd and sacred name,  
Beneath the shelter of his hand and seal,  
A murdering wretch, a sacrilegious bigot,  
'To stab at once the gallant prince of *England*,  
And public faith? nay, with a poison'd dagger  
(Such his inhuman cowardice) to stab him?

So well, 'tis true, he judg'd ; the christian prince  
 Had now been mingled with the harmless dead ;  
 If his bright princess, glorious *Eleonora*,  
 Had not redeem'd his dearer life with hers.  
 You heard in what extremity she lies.  
 Go, tell the tyrant then—O heaven and earth !  
 O vanity of virtue ! that *Daraxa*  
 Should e'er to *Selim* send so fell a message——  
 I will suppress its bitterness—Yet tell him,  
 This crime has plac'd eternal bars betwixt us,  
 See my last tear to love—*Arabian* wilds  
 Shall bury 'midst their rocks the lost *Daraxa*.  
 Away !

*Gloſt.* Behold, they bear this way the princess,  
 Once more to taste the sweetness of the sun,  
 Ere yet to mortal light she bid farewell.

## SCENE V.

GLOSTER, DARAXA, THEALD, EDWARD, ELEONORA  
*borne in by her attendants on a couch.*

ELEONORA, *entering.*

A little on, a little further on,  
 Bear me, my friends, into the cooling air.  
 O chearful sun ! O vital light of day !

*Edw.* That sun is witness of our matchless woes,  
 Is witness of our innocence——Alas !  
 What have we done to merit this disaster ?

*Eleo.* O earth ! O genial roofs ! O the dear coast  
 Of *Albion's* isle ! which I no more shall see !—

*Edw.* Nay, yield not to thy weakness, *Eleonora* !  
 Sustain thyself a little, nor desert me !  
 Th' all-ruling Goodness may relieve us still.

*Eleo.* *Edward* ! I tremble ! terror seizes on me !  
 Thro the rent veil of yon surrounding sky,  
 I had a glimpse, I saw th' eternal world.



They call, they urge me hence—Yes, I obey.  
But O forgive me, heaven! if 'tis with pain,  
With agonies, I tear my soul from his!

*Edw.* Heavens! what I suffer!—How thy plaintive voice

Shoots anguish thro my soul!

*Eles.* Some power unseen—  
Thy hand, my *Edward*—some dark power unseen  
Is dragging me away—O yet a little,  
A little, spare me!—Ah! how shall I leave  
My weeping friends, my husband and my children?

*Ed.* Unhappy friends! O greatly wretched husband!  
And O poor careless orphans, who not feel  
'The depth of your misfortune!

*Eles.* Lay me down;  
Soft, lay me down—my powers are all dissolv'd—  
A little forward bend me—Oh!

*Edw.* O heav'n!  
How that soft frame is torn with cruel pangs!  
Pangs robb'd from me!

*Eles.* 'Tis thence they borrow ease—  
My children! O my children! you no more  
Have now a mother; now, alas! no more  
Have you a mother, O my hapless children!

*Edw.* What do I hear! What desolating words  
Are these? more bitter than a thousand deaths!  
Death to my soul! Call up thy failing spirit,  
And leave me not to misery and ruin!

*Eles.* *Edward*, I feel an interval of ease;  
And, ere I die, have something to impart  
That will relieve my sufferings.

*Edw.* Speak, my soul!  
Speak thy desire: I live but to fulfil it.

*Eles.* Thou seest in what a hopeless state I lie,  
I who this morning rose in pride of youth,  
High-blooming, promis'd many happy years.  
I die for thee, I self-devoted die.

Think



Think not, from this that I repent my vow ;  
 Or that, with little vanity, I boast it :  
 No ; what I did from unrepenting love  
 I chearful did, from love that knows no fear,  
 No pain, no weak remission of its ardor.  
 And what, alas ! what was it but the dictate  
 Of honour and of duty ? nay, 'twas selfish,  
 To save me from unsufferable pain,  
 From dragging here a wretched life without thee.  
 Two fears yet stand betwixt my soul and peace.  
 One is for thee, lest thou disturb my grave  
 With tears of wild despair, grieve not like those  
 Who have no hope. We yet shall meet again ;  
 We still are in a kind Creator's hand ;  
 Eternal goodness reigns. Besides, this parting,  
 This parting, *Edward*, must have come at last,  
 When years of friendship had, perhaps, exalted  
 Our love, if that can be, to keener anguish.  
 Think what thy station, what thy fame demanded ;  
 Nor yield thy virtue even to worthy passions.  
 My other care—my other care is idle—  
 From that thy equal tenderness with mine,  
 Thy love and generosity secure me.  
 Our children——

*Edw.*

Yes, I penetrate thy fear.

But hear me, dying sweetness ! On this hand,  
 This cold pale hand I vow, our children never,  
 Shall never call another by the name  
 Sacred to thee ; my *Eleonora's* children  
 Shall never feel the hateful power thou fear'st.  
 As one in life, so death cannot divide us.  
 Nor high descent, nor beauty, nought that woman,  
 In her unbounded vanity of heart,  
 Can wish, shall ever tempt my faith from thee.  
 Shall ever, said I ? Piteous boast indeed !  
 O nothing can !—I should be gross of heart,

Tasteless and dull as earth, to think with patience,  
 Without abhorrence, of a second *Hymen*.  
 Where can I find such beauty? Where such grace,  
 The soul of beauty? where such winning charms?  
 Where such a soft divinity of goodness?  
 Such faith? such love? such tenderness unequal'd?  
 Such all that heaven could give--to make me wretched!  
 Talk not of comfort—Into what a gulph  
 A lone abyfs of misery I fall,  
 The moment that I lose thee—Oh! I know not!  
 I dare not think!—But these unhappy orphans—  
 Ah the dire cause that makes it double duty—  
 Shall now be doubly mine; to shelter them,  
 'These pledges of our love, I will attempt  
 To brave the horrors of loath'd life without thee.

*Eleo.* Enough! it is enough! On this condition  
 Receive them from my hands.

*Edw.* Dear hands! dear gift!  
 Dear, precious, dying, miserable gift!  
 With transport once receiv'd, but now with anguish!

*Eleo.* All-soft'ning time will heal my woes. The dead  
 Soon leave the passions of the living free.

*Edw.* Detested life!--O take me, take me with thee!

*Eleo.* No, *Edward*, live, or else I die in vain.

• *Edw.* Raise, raise, my *Eleonora*, thy sweet eyes,  
 Once more behold thy children—

*Eleo.* Oh! 'Tis darkness—  
 A deadly weight——

*Edw.* Thou leav'st me then for ever!

*Eleo.* Where am I?—Ah!—a tenant still to pain.  
 The quivering flame of life heaps up a little.  
 Meantime, my *Edward*, 'tis my last request,  
 That thou wouldst leave me, while I yet enjoy  
 A parting gleam of thought--Leave me to Heaven!--  
*Gloster*—farewel--Be careful of the prince—  
 Attend him hence—and double now thy friendship!

*Edw.* Barbarian! off!—Ah! whither would it thou  
 drag me!

*Gloster.*

*Gloſt.* My lord, in pity to the princeſs—

*Edw.*

Oh !

*Eleo.* Farewel ! farewel !— Receive my laſt adieu,

*Edward !* my deareſt lord ! farewel for ever !

*Edw.* O word of horror !—Can I ?—No ! I cannot !  
There, take me, lead me, hurl me to perdition !

## SCENE VI.

ELEONORA, DARAXA, THEALD, *Attendants.*

*Eleo.* 'Tis paſt, the bitterneſs of death is paſt—

Alas ! *Daraxa*, I can ne'er requite

Thy generous cares for me. Thou art the cauſe

My *Edward* lives, my children have a father,

Thy heaven-inſpir'd propoſal—Tell him, *Theald*,

That, in the troubled moments of our parting,

I had forgot to beg he would reſtore

Th' *Arabian* princeſs to her friends and country—

Thy hand—This ſure, howe'er in faith we differ,

Humanity, the ſoul of all religion,

May well permit.

*Dar.*

By virtue's ſacred fire !

Our paradise, the garden of the bleſt,

Ne'er ſmil'd upon a purer ſoul than thine.

For me, think not of me ; ſuch are my woes,

That I diſdain all care, deteſt relief :

My name is trod in duſt ; thine beams for ever,

The richeſt gem that crowns the worth of woman.

*Eleo.* The guilt of *Selim* cannot ſtain thy virtues :

It rather lends them luſtre—Bear me back,

My dear attendants : and good *Theald*, come,

Come, aid my mounting ſoul to ſpring away,

From the lov'd fetters of this kindred clay.

*The End of the Third Act.*

A C T

## ACT IV. SCENE I.

THEALD, and a gentleman belonging to him.

THEALD.

TO me a dervise ? Thro the furious camp,  
Yet raging at the perfidy of *Selim*,  
How did he safely pass ?

*Gent.*

Sir, he had fallen

A victim to their vengeance : but he told them,  
His life was of importance to the prince,  
That he who struck him stabb'd the heart of *Edward*.  
This stay'd their rage ; then, after a strict search,  
They let him pass thro ranks of glaring eyes.

I have besides to say, an *English* ship  
And one from *Italy* are just arriv'd :  
'The first brings great dispatches to prince *Edward* ;  
'The other, *holy father*, these to you. [Kneeling.  
*The.* Go, bid this dervise enter.

## SCENE II.

THEALD : *he opens and looks on the dispatches.*

Awful Heaven !

Great ruler of the various heart of man !  
Since thou hast rais'd me to conduct thy church,  
Without the base cabal too often practis'd,  
Beyond my wish, my thought, give me the lights,  
The virtues which that sacred trust requires :  
A loving, lov'd untirring power,  
Such as becomes a father ; humble wisdom ;  
Plain, primitive sincerity ; kind zeal,  
For truth and virtue rather than opinions ;  
And, above all, the charitable soul  
Of healing peace and Christian moderation. —  
The dervise comes.

SCENE



## S C E N E III.

THEALD, SELIM *disguis'd as a dervise*.

*The.* With me, what would'st thou, dervise?

*Sel.* The princess *Eleonora*, lives she still?

*The.* She lives, and that is all.

*Sel.* Allah be prais'd!

Then lives the honour of the brightning name  
Of *Saracen* and *Mussulman*.

*The.* How, dervise?

What can wipe out the horror of this deed?

*Sel.* The deed was execrable; but my hand  
This instant shall prevent its dire effect.

I bring a certain remedy for poison;

Nor can it come too late, while wandering life  
Yet, with faint impulse, stirs along the veins.

*The.* Ha! dervise, art thou sure of what thou say'st?

*Sel.* Christian I am; and therefore am I here.

Haste, lead me to the princess: tho she lay

Even in the last extremity, tho call'd

By the fierce angel who compels the dead,

Yet bold experience gives me room to hope.

Oft have I seen its vital touch diffuse

New vigour thro the poison'd streams of life,

When almost settled into dead stagnation;

Swift as a southern gale unbinds the flood.

Say, wilt thou trust me with the trial, Christian?

*The.* Thou know'st, we have great reason for distrust;

But fear in those who can no longer hope,

Were idle and absurd.

*Sel.* Bright heaven! what fear

Is there a slave of such inhuman baseness

To add fresh outrage to a dying princess?

For virtue dying; look into my eye:

Does



Does one weak ray there shun the keenest gaze?  
Say, dost thou there behold so foul a bottom?

*The.* No; seeming truth and generous candor shine  
In what thou say'st. Come, follow me, good dervise.

## S C E N E IV.

THEALD, SELIM *disguis'd*, DARAXA.

*Dar.* At last, thro various pangs the dying princefs  
Sees the delivering moment, and demands  
Thy presence, reverend Christian.

*The.* Dervise, come.  
Forbid it heaven this aid should be too late!

## S C E N E V.

DARAXA.

Heaven! can it be! the very face of *Selim*!  
'Tis he himself—I know him, 'tis the sultan;  
And, as he shot athwart me, from his eye  
Flash'd the proud lightning of affronted virtue.  
He must be innocent; his being here  
Is radiant proof he must—O weak DARAXA!  
What man of virtue more would deign to lodge  
His image in thy breast? Ah! what avails  
The light unfounded love, the treacherous friendship,  
That, with inhuman cowardice, gives up  
A worthy man, to infamy and slander?  
They talk'd of aid---what aid?

[*A cry heard within.*

Alas! 'tis past!

Death must be in that cry. O let me fly  
To snatch one parting look; but see the prince  
Rous'd by the sounds of sorrow this way comes.  
Unhappy prince! I venerate his tears----  
O gracious Allah! pity and support him.

[*Exit.*

S C E N E

## SCENE VI.

EDWARD.

That cry was death : Alas ! she is no more !  
 The matchless *Eleonora* is no more !---  
 Where am I ?--Heavens !--Ah ! what a hideous desert  
 Is now this world, this blasted world around me !  
 O sun, I hate thee, I abhor thy light,  
 That shews not *Eleonora* ! Earth, thy joy,  
 Thy sweetness all is fled, all all that made  
 Thy ways to me delightful, *Eleonora* !  
 O *Eleonora* ! perish'd *Eleonora* !  
 For ever lost ! ---That tent ! ah me ! that tent !

[*Going into the tent starts back.*]

I dare not enter there. There death displays  
 His utmost terrors---Pale and lifeless, there,  
 She lies, whose looks were love, whose beauty smil'd  
 The sweet effulgence of endearing virtue---  
 And here I last beheld her---Ay, and how,  
 And how beheld her ?---The remorseless image  
 Will hunt me to the grave---I see her suffering,  
 With female softness yet to pain superior,  
 Fearful and bold at once, with the strong hand  
 Of mighty love constraining feeble nature,  
 To steal me from affliction---Let me fly  
 This fatal ground---But whither shall I fly ?  
 To *England*---O I cannot bear the thought  
 Of e'er returning to that country more !  
 That country, witness of our happy days,  
 Where at each step remember'd bliss will sting  
 My soul to anguish. I already hear  
 Malice exclaim, nay, blushing valour sigh :  
 Where is thy princess ? where the wish of thousands ?  
 The charm, the transport of the public eye ?  
 Base prince ! And art thou not ashamed to bring  
 No trophy home but *Eleonora's* corpse ? ---

The

The grave too is shut up, that last retreat  
 Of wretched mortals---Yes, my word is pass'd,  
 To *Eleonora* pass'd. Our orphan-children  
 Bind me to life---O dear, O dangerous passions!  
 The valiant, in himself, what can he suffer?  
 Or what does he regard his single woes?  
 But when, alas, he multiplies himself  
 To dearer selves, to the lov'd tender fair,  
 To those whose bliss, whose beings hang upon him,  
 To helpless children! then, O then! he feels  
 The point of misery festring in his heart,  
 And weakly weeps his fortune like a coward.  
 Such, such am I! undone!----

## S C E N E VII.

EDWARD, GLOSTER.

*Edw.* My lord of *Gloster*,  
 I thought my orders were to be alone.

*Gloft.* Forgive my fond intrusion---But I cannot  
 Be so regardless of thy welfare, *Edward*,  
 As to obey these orders.

*Edw.* But they shall,  
 Shall be obey'd---I will enjoy my sorrows,  
 All that is left me now.

*Gloft.* The more thy grief,  
 Just in its cause, but frantic in degree,  
 Seeks aggravating solitude, the more  
 It suits my love and duty to attend thee,  
 To try to sooth---

*Edw.* Away! thou never shalt.  
 Not all that idle wisdom can suggest,  
 All the vain talk of proud unfeeling reason,  
 Shall rob me of one tear.

*Gloft.*

*Gloft.*

Of nature's tears

I would not rob thee : they invigorate virtue,  
 Soften, at once, and fortify the heart ;  
 But when they rise to speak this desperate language,  
 They then grow tears of weakness ; yes—

*Edw.*

I care not !

Weakness, whate'er they be, I will indulge them,  
 Will, in despite of thee and all mankind,  
 Devote my joyless days for ever to them.

*Gloft.* Reason and virtue then are empty names ?

*Edw.* Hence ! leave me to my fate—You have un-  
 done me ;

You have made shipwreck of my peace, among you,  
 My happiness and honour ; and I now  
 Roam the detested world, a careless wretch !

*Gloft.* Thy honour yet is safe, how long I know not,  
 For full it drives upon the rocks of passion.  
 O all ye pitying powers that rule mankind !  
 Who so unworthy but may proudly deck him  
 With his fair-weather virtue, that exults,  
 Glad, o'er the summer main ? The tempest comes,  
 The rough winds rage aloud ; when from the helm  
 This virtue shrinks, and in a corner lies  
 Lamenting—Heavens ! if privileg'd from trial,  
 How cheap a thing were virtue !

*Edw.*

Do—insult me—

Rail, spare me not—rail, *Gloster*, all the world—  
 But know, mean time, thou canst not make me feel  
 thee—

I have no more connection with mankind.

*Gloft.* Insult thee, *Edward* ? Do these tears insult thee ?  
 These old man's tears !—Friendship, my prince, can  
 weep,

As well as love—But while I weep thy fortune,  
 Let me not weep thy virtue sunk beneath it—  
 Thou hast no more connection with mankind ?  
 Put off thy craving senses, the deep wants

And



And infinite dependencies of nature ;  
 Put off that strongest passion of the soul,  
 Soul of the soul, love to society ;  
 Put off all gratitude for what is past,  
 All generous hope of what is yet to come ;  
 Put off each sense of honour and of duty :  
 Then use this language—Let me tell thee, *Edward*,  
 Thou hast connections with mankind, and great ones,  
 Thou know'st not of ; connections ! that might rouse  
 The smallest spark of honour in thy breast,  
 To wide-awaken'd life and fair ambition.

*Edw.* What dost thou mean ?

*Gloſt.* What mean'st thou ?—this day, in *England*,  
 How many ask of *Palestine* their king,  
*Edward* their king ?—Read these—

*Edw.* (*opening the dispatches.* O *Gloſter* !—*Gloſter* !—  
 Alas ! my royal father is no more !

The gentleſt of mankind, the moſt abus'd !  
 Of gracious nature, a fit ſoil for virtues,  
 'Till there his creatures ſow'd their flattering lies,  
 And made him—No, not all their curſed arts  
 Could ever make him insolent or cruel.  
 O my deluded father ! Little joy  
 Had ſt thou in life, led from thy real good,  
 And genuine glory, from thy people's love,  
 That nobleſt aim of kings, by ſmiling traitors.

Thus weak of heart, thus deſolate of ſoul,  
 Ah, how unfit am I, with ſteady hand,  
 To rule a troubled ſtate !—She, ſhe is gone,  
 Softner of care, the dear reward of toil,  
 'The ſource of virtue ! She, who to a crown  
 Had lent new ſplendor, who had grac'd a throne  
 Like the ſweet ſeraph mercy tempering juſtice.  
 O *Eleonora* ! any life with thee,  
 The plainest could have charm'd : but pomp and  
 pleaſure,

All that a loving people can beſtow,



By thee unshar'd, will only serve to fret  
The wounds of woe, and make me more unhappy !

*Gloſt.* Now is the time, now liſt thy ſoul to virtue !  
Behold a criſis, ſent by heaven, to ſave thee.

Whate'er, my prince, can touch, or can command,  
Can quicken or exalt the heart of man,

Now ſpeaks to thine—Thy children claim their father,  
Nay, more than father, claim their double parent ;

For ſuch thy promiſe was to *Eleonora* :

Thy ſubjects claim their king, thy troops their chief :

The manes of thy anceſtors conſign

Their long deſcended glory to thy hands ;

And thy dejected country calls upon thee

To ſave her, raiſe her, to reſtore her honour,

To ſpread her ſure dominion o'er the deep,

And bid her yet ariſe the ſcourge of *France*.

Angels themſelves might envy thee the joy,

That waits thy will, of doing general good :

Of ſpreading virtue, chearing lonely worth ;

Of daſhing down the proud ; of guarding arts,

The ſacred rights of induſtry and freedom ;

Of making a whole generous people happy.

O *Edward* ! *Edward* ! the moſt piercing tranſports

Of the beſt love can never equal theſe !

And need I add—Thy *Eleonora*'s death

Calls out for vengeance—

*Edw.*

Ha !

*Gloſt.*

If thou, indeed,

Doſt honour thus her memory, then ſhew it,

Not by ſoft tears and womaniſh complaints,

But ſhew it like a man !—

*Edw.*

I will !

*Gloſt.*

Yon towers !—

*Edw.* 'Tis true !

*Gloſt.*

Yon guilty towers !

*Edw.*

Infult us ſtill !

*Gloſt.*

*Gloſt.* The murderer of thy princeſs riots there! —

*Ed.* But ſhall not long! — Thou art my better genius,  
Thou brave old man! thou haſt recall'd my virtue —  
I was benumb'd with ſorrow — what — or where —  
I know not — never to have thought of this.  
Bright virtue, welcome! vigour of the mind!  
The flame from heaven that lights up higher being!  
Thrice welcome! with thy noble fervant anger,  
And juſt revenge — Hence, let us to the camp,  
And there tranſuſe our ſoul into the troops.  
This ſultan's blood will eaſe my fever'd breaſt.  
Yes, I will take ſuch vengeance on this city,  
That all mankind ſhall turn their eyes to *Jaffa*;  
And as they ſee her turrets ſunk in duſt,  
Shall learn to dread the terrors of the juſt.

---

## ACT V. SCENE I.

SELIM.

**O** My *Daraxa*! thou haſt charm'd my ſoul!  
This reconciling interview has ſooth'd  
My troubled boſom into tender joy:  
As when the ſpring firſt, on the ſofter'd top  
Of *Lebanon*, unbinds her lovely trefſes,  
And ſhakes her blooming ſweets from *Carmel*'s brow —  
It only now remains to ſee the prince. —

## SCENE II.

SELIM, THEALD.

*The.* I ſought thee, worthy dervife.

*Sel.* Reverend Chriſtian,  
My toiling thoughts can find no fix'd repoſe,

'Till

'Till the wrong'd sultan's vindicated honour  
 Shine out as bright as yon unfully'd sky.  
 Conduct me to the prince—I claim that justice.—  
 It stings my conscious soul with sick impatience,  
 To think what *Selim* suffers. For a man,  
 Who loves the ways of truth and open virtue,  
 To lye beneath the burning imputation  
 Of baseness and of crimes—such horrid crimes!—  
 O 'tis a keen unsufferable torment!  
 Come, let me then discharge this other part  
 Of my commission.

*Thea.* That thou soon shalt do.  
 He frait will come this way, the king of *England*,  
 Such now he is. Mean time, 'tis fit to tell thee,  
 He must be manag'd gently; for his passions  
 Are all abroad, in wild confusion hurl'd:  
 The winds, the floods, and lightning mixt together.  
 I need not say how little, in this uproar,  
 Avails the broken thwarted light of reason.

*Selim.* Fear not.—I trust in innocence, and truth.

*Thea.* He cannot long delay, for as I enter'd,  
 I saw him parting from the hurried camp,  
 That lighten'd wide around him: burnish'd helms,  
 And glittering spears, and ardent thronging foldiers,  
 Demanding all the signal, when to storm  
 These walls devoted to their vengeance.—

*Selim.*

Ha!

Then let us quickly find him—But he comes.

### SCENE III.

SELIM, THEALD, EDWARD, GLOSTER.

*Edw.* Whence is it those barbarians, here again,  
 Those base, those murdering cowards, dare be seen?  
 What new accurs'd attempt is now on foot?

What

What new affassination?—Start not, dervise,  
 Tinge not thy caitiff cheek with red'ning honour.  
 What thou!—Dost thou pretend to feel reproach?  
 Art thou not of a shameless race of people,  
 Harden'd in arts of cruelty and blood,  
 Perfidious all? Yes, have you not profan'd  
 The faith of nations? broke the holy tie  
 That binds the families of earth together,  
 That gives even foes to meet with generous trust,  
 And teaches war security? Your prince,  
 Your prince has done it! And you should hereafter  
 Be hunted from your dens like savage beasts,  
 Be crush'd like serpents!

*Thea.* Sir, this dervise comes,  
 To clear the sultan *Selim* from that crime,  
 Which you, with strong appearance, charge upon him.

*Edw.* Appearance, *Theald!* with unquestion'd proof.  
 Doubtless the villain would be glad to change  
 The course by nature fix'd, enjoy his crimes  
 Without their evil—But he shall not scape me!

*Sel.* If, king of *England*, in this weighty matter,  
 On which depends the weal and life of thousands,  
 You love and seek the truth, let reason judge,  
 Cool, steady, quiet, and dispassion'd reason.  
 For never yet, since the proud selfish race  
 Of men began to jar, did passion give,  
 Nor ever can it give, a right decision.

*Edw.* Reason has judg'd, and passion shall chastise,  
 Shall make you howl, ye cowards of the *East!*  
 What can be clearer? This wild prince of *Jassa!*  
 This infamy of princes! Sends a ruffian,  
 By his own hand and seal commission'd, sends him,  
 To treat of peace: and, as I read his letters,  
 The villain stabs me—This, if this wants light,  
 There is no certainty in human reason;  
 If this not shines with all-convincing truth,

You



Yon sun is dark—And yet these cowards come  
 With lying shifts, and low elusive arts—  
 O it inflames my anger into madness!  
 This added insult on our understanding,  
 This treacherous attempt to steal away  
 The only joy and treasure of my life,  
 Sweet sacred vengeance for my murder'd princess.

*Selim.* The cursed wretch who did assail thy life,  
 O king of *England*, was indeed an envoy  
 Sent by the prince of *Jaffa*: This we own.  
 But then he was an execrable bigot,  
 Who, for such horrid purposes, had crept  
 Into the cheated sultan's court and service,  
 As by the traitor's papers we have learn'd.  
 For know, there lives, upon the craggy cliffs  
 Of wild *Phœnician* mountains, a dire race,  
 A nation of assassins. Dreadful zeal,  
 Fierce and intolerant of all religion  
 That differs from their own, is the black soul  
 Of that infernal state. Soon as their chief,  
 The old man (so they stile him) of the mountains,  
 Gives out his baleful will, however fell,  
 However wicked and abhor'd it be,  
 Tho' cloath'd in danger, the most cruel death,  
 They, swift and silent, glide thro' every land,  
 As fly the gloomy ministers of vengeance,  
 Famine and plague; they lie for years conceal'd,  
 Make light of oaths, nay, sometimes change religion.  
 And never fail to execute his orders.  
 Of these the villain was, these ruffian fains,  
 The curse of earth, the terror of mankind:  
 And thy engagement, prince, in this crusado,  
 That was the reason whence they sought thy life.

*Edw.* False, false as hell! the lye of guilty fear!  
 You all are bigots, robbers, ruffians all!  
 It is the very genius of your nation.

Vindictive



Vindictive rage, the thirst of blood consumes you :  
 You live by rapine, thence your empire rose ;  
 And your religion is a meer pretence  
 To rob and murder in the name of heaven.

*Selim.* Be patient, prince, be more humane and just,  
 You have your virtues, have your vices too ;  
 And we have ours. The liberal hand of nature  
 Has not created us, nor any nation,  
 Beneath the blessed canopy of heaven,  
 Of such malignant clay, but each may boast  
 Their native virtues, and their maker's bounty.  
 You call us bigots.—O ! canst thou with that  
 Reproach us, Christian prince ? What brought thee  
 hither ?

What else but bigotry ? What dost thou here ?  
 What else but persecute ?—The truth is great,  
 Greater than thou, and I will give it way ;  
 Even thou thyself, in all thy rage, wilt hear it—  
 From their remotest source, these holy wars  
 What have they breath'd but bigotry and rapine ?  
 Did not the first *Crusaders*, when their zeal  
 Should have shone out the purest, did they not,  
 Led by the frantic hermit who began  
 The murderous trade, thro their own countries spread  
 The woes their vice could not reserve for ours ?

Tho this exceeds the purport of my message ;  
 Yet must I thus insulted in my country,  
 Insulted in religion, bid thee think,  
 O king of *England*, on the different conduct  
 Of *Saracens* and *Christians*, when beneath  
 Your pious *Gedfrey*, in the first crusado,  
*Jerusalem* was sack'd, and when beneath  
 Our generous *Saladin* it was retaken—  
 O hideous scene ! my soul within me shrinks,  
 Abhorrent, from the view !—Twelve thousand wretches,  
 Receiv'd to mercy, void of all defence,  
 Trusting to plighted faith, to purchas'd safety,  
 Behold

Behold these naked wretches, in cold blood,  
Men, women, children, murder'd, basely murder'd!  
The holy temple, which you came to rescue,  
Regorges with the barbarous profanation.  
The streets run dismal torrents. Drown'd in blood  
The very foldier sickens at his carnage.  
Couldst thou, O sun, behold the blasting fight,  
And lift again thy sacred eye on mortals?  
A ruthless race! Who can do this, can do it,  
To please the general father of mankind!  
While nobler *Saladin* —

*Edw.*

Away! be gone!

With thee, vile dervise, what have I to do?  
I lose my hour of vengeance, I debase me,  
To hold this talk with thee.

*Sel.*

While truth and reason

Speak from my tongue, vile dervise as I am,  
Yet am I greater than the highest monarch,  
Who, from blind fury, grows the slave of passion.  
Besides, I come to justify a prince,  
Howe'er in other qualities below thee,  
In love of goodness, truth, humanity,  
And honour, sir, thy equal;—yes, thy equal!—

*Edw.* What? how? compare me with a damn'd assassin?

A matchless villain!—Ha! presumptuous dervise!  
Thou gnaw'st thy quivering lip—A smother'd passion  
Shakes thro' thy frame.—What villainy is that  
Thou dar'st not utter?—Wert thou not a wretch,  
Protected by thy habit, this right hand  
Should crush thee into atoms—Hence! away!  
Go tell thy master that I hold him base,  
Beyond the power of words to speak his baseness!  
A coward! an assassinating coward!  
And when I once have dragg'd him from his city,  
Which I will straitway do—I then will make him,  
In all the gall and bitterness of guilt,

VOL. II.

L

Grinding

Grinding the vengeful steel betwixt his teeth,  
Will make the traitor own it.

[*Selim, discovering himself.*  
Never !

*Edw.* Ha !

*Sel.* 'Thou canst not, haughty monarch !---I am he !  
I am this *Selim* ! this insulted *Selim* !

Yet clear as day, and will confound thy passion.

*Edw.* 'Thou *Selim* !

*Sel.* I.

*Edw.* Was ever guilt so bold ?

*Sel.* Did ever innocence descend to fear ?

*Edw.* This bears some shew of honour. Wilt thou then  
Decide it by the sword ?

*Sel.* I will do more---

*Edw.* How more ?

*Sel.* Decide it by superior reason.

*Edw.* No weak evasions !---

*Sel.* If I not convince thee,

If by thyself I am not of this crime

Acquitted, then I grant thee thy demand.

Nay more, yon yielded city shall be thine :

For know, hot prince, I should disdain a throne,

I could not fill with honour. Were I guilty,

I should not tremble at thy threatening voice ;

No, 'tis myself I fear.

*Edw.* What shall I think ?

*Sel.* Hear but one witness, and I ask no more,

To clear my name. The witness is a woman.

Her looks are truth ; fair uncorrupted truth

Beams from her eyes. Thou ne'er canst doubt such  
beauty ;

For 'tis th' expression of a spotless soul.

*Edw.* Curse on thy mean luxurious eastern arts  
Of cowardise ! Thou wouldst seduce my vengeance---

But I detest all beauty---Barbarous sultan !

Ah ! 'Thou hast murder'd beauty ! thy fell crime---

Halle.

Haste, *Gloster*, haste---in sight of camp and city,  
Prepare the lists---Now shew thyself a prince,  
Or die in shameful tortures like a slave.

*Sel.* I came not hither or to dread thy wrath,  
Or court thy mercy.

*Glof.* Sir, you cannot justly  
Refuse him his demand. The fervent soul  
Of undissembled innocence, methinks,  
Is felt in what he says. First hear this person ;  
And if she gives not full conviction, then,  
Have then recourse to what should always be  
The last appeal of reasonable beings,  
Brute force.

*Edw.* Well then, conduct her hither, sultan.---

*Selim goes out.*

Ah ! my disorder'd mind ! from thought to thought,  
Uncertain, toss'd, the wreck of stormy passion !  
This rage a while supports me ; but I feel  
It will desert me soon, and I again  
Shall soon relapse to misery and weakness.  
*O Eleonora !* little didst thou think,  
How deeply wretched thy dire gift of life  
Would make me !

S C E N E IV.

EDWARD, GLOSTER, THEALD ;

*To them SELIM conducting ELEONORA, DARAXA*

*Sel.* Raise thy eyes, O king of *England*,  
To the bright witness of my blameless honour.

*Edw.* No ; beauty shall no more engage my eyes,  
It shall no more profane the shrine devoted  
To the sweet image of my *Eleonora !*  
Let her declare her knowledge in this matter.

L 2

*Elen.*



*Eleo.* Will not my *Edward* bless me with a look?

*Edw.* What angel borrows *Eleonora's* voice!--

O thou pale shade of her I weep for ever!

Permit me thus to worship thee---Thou art!--

Amazing heaven!--Thou art my *Eleonora*!

My *Eleonora's* self! my dear, my true,

My living *Eleonora*!--What--to whom

Owe I this miracle? this better life?--

Oppressive joy!--owe I my *Eleonora*?

*Eleo.* To him, that generous prince, who put his life,  
His honour on the desperate risque to save me,  
When in the arms of death--Depriv'd of voice,  
Of motion, and of sense, benum'd I lay,  
My frightened train around me thought me dead,  
And fill'd the tent with cries; my heart alone  
Still feebly beat; but soon the poison's force  
Had driv'n out life from that its last retreat;  
If in the moment of approaching fate,  
He, like my guardian angel, had not brought  
An antidote of wond'rous power, by which  
I am to light restor'd--to thee, my *Edward*!

*Edw.* Did he, did he preserve thee! He, whom thus  
I have with such inhuman pride insulted!

O blind, O brutish, O injurious rage!

They, they are wise, who, when they feel thy madness,  
Seal up their lips. And canst thou then forgive me,

'Thou who hast o'er me gain'd that noblest triumph,

The triumph of humanity?---Thou canst.

'Tis easier for the generous to forgive

Than for offence to ask it.

*Sel.*

Use not, prince,

So harsh a word. More than forgive, I love

Thy noble heat, thy beautiful disorder.

O! I am too much man, I feel, myself

Too much the charming force of human passions,

E'er to pretend, with supercilious brow,

With



With proud affected virtue, to disdain them.

*Edw.* How? generous sultan, how shall I requite thee?  
Here---Take thy lov'd *Daraxa*, whom I meant  
To have restor'd, when this misfortune happen'd;  
But secret-working Heaven ordain'd her stay,  
To save us all.

*Sel.* Wert thou the lord of earth,  
Thou could'st not give me more!--my dear *Daraxa*!

*Edw.* Hence to the camp, my *Gloster*---Bid the soldiers  
Forake the trenches---Let unbounded joy  
Reign, fearless, o'er the mingled camp and city---  
Go, tell my faithful soldiers, that their queen  
My *Eleonora* lives! A prize beyond  
The chance of war to give! She lives to soften  
My too imperious temper, and to make them,  
To make my people happy!--O my soul!  
What love e'er equall'd thine? O dearest! best!  
Pride of thy sex! inimitable goodness!  
Whenever woman henceforth shall be prais'd  
For conjugal affection, men will say,  
There shine the virtues of an *Eleonora*!  
Transporting blifs!--How bountiful is heaven!  
Depressing often, but to raise us more.  
Let never those despair who follow virtue.  
Love--gratitude--divide me--once more, sultan,  
Forgive me, pardon my mistaken zeal,  
That left my country, cross'd the stormy seas,  
To war with thee, brave prince, to war with honour.  
Now that my passions give me leave to think;  
The hand of heaven appears in what I suffer'd,  
My erring zeal has suffer'd by a zealot.

*Sel.* It does, O king. And venerable Christian,  
I know thy moderation will excuse me.  
But since by ruling wisdom (who unweigh'd,  
Unmeant, does nought) men are so various made,  
So various turn'd, that in opinions, they

Must blindly think, or take a different way ;  
In spite of force, since judgment will be free ;  
Then let us in this righteous mean agree :  
Let holy rage, let persecution cease ;  
Let the head argue, but the heart be peace ;  
Let all mankind in love of what is right,  
In virtue and humanity unite.

*End of the Fifth Act.*

*Tancred*

*Tancred and Sigismunda.*

A

TRAGEDY.

L 4



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TO HIS  
ROYAL HIGHNESS  
*FREDERICK*  
<sup>2</sup>  
Prince of WALES.

S I R,

**T**HE honour your ROYAL  
HIGHNESS has done me in the  
protection you was pleased to  
give to this tragedy, emboldens  
me to lay it now at your feet, and beg  
your permission to publish it under your  
royal patronage. The favouring and pro-  
tecting of letters has been, in all ages and  
countries, one distinguishing mark of a  
L 5 great



## DEDICATION.

great prince ; and that with good reason, not only as it shews a justness of taste, and elevation of mind, but as the influence of such a protection, by exciting good writers to labour with more emulation in the improvement of their several talents, not a little contributes to the embellishment and instruction of society. But of all the different species of writing, none have such an effect upon the lives and manners of men as the dramatic ; and therefore that of all others most deserves the attention of princes, who, by a judicious approbation of such pieces as tend to promote all public and private virtue, may more than by any coercive methods secure the purity of the stage, and in consequence thereof greatly advance the morals and politeness of their people. How eminently **YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS** has always extended your favour and patronage to every art and science, and in a particular manner to dramatic performances, is too well known to the world for me to mention it here. Allow me only to wish, that what I have now  
the

## DEDICATION.

the honour to offer to your ROYAL HIGHNESS, may be judged not unworthy of your protection, at least in the *Sentiments* which it inculcates. A warm and grateful sense of your goodness to me makes me desirous to seize every occasion of declaring in public, with what profound respect and dutiful attachment I am,

S I R,

Your ROYAL HIGHNESS'S

*most obliged,*

*most obedient, and*

*most devoted Servant,*

JAMES THOMSON.

## ADVERTISEMENT,

**T**HIS play is considerably shortened in the performance; but I hope it will not be disagreeable to the reader to see it as it was at first written; there being a great difference betwixt a play in the closet, and upon the stage.

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# PROLOGUE.

**B***BOLD is the man ! who, in this nicer age,  
Presumes to tread the chaste corrected stage.  
Now, with gay tinsel arts, we can no more  
Conceal the want of nature's sterling ore.  
Our spells are vanish'd, broke our magic wand,  
That us'd to waft you over sea and land:  
Before your light the fairy people fade,  
The demons fly---The ghost itself is laid.  
In vain of martial scenes the loud alarms,  
The mighty prompter thundering out to arms,  
The play-house posse clattering from afar,  
The close-wedg'd battle, and the din of war.  
Now, even the senate seldom we convene ;  
The yawning fathers nod behind the scene.  
Your taste rejects the glittering false sublime,  
To sigh in metaphor, and die in rhyme.  
High rant is tumbled from his gallery throne :  
Description, dreams---nay families are gone.  
What shall we then ? to please you how devise  
Whose judgment sits not in your ears and eyes ?  
Thrice happy ! could we catch great Shakespear's art,  
To trace the deep recesses of the heart ;  
His simple plain sublime, to which is given  
To strike the soul with darted flame from heaven :  
Could we awake soft Otway's tender woe,  
The pomp of verse and golden lines of Rowe:*

*We to your hearts apply : let them attend ;  
Before their silent candid bar we bend.  
If warm'd, they listen, 'tis our noblest praise ;  
If cold, they wither all the muse's bays.*

Persons

## Persons represented.

|                                    |        |               |
|------------------------------------|--------|---------------|
| TANCRED, Count of <i>Leece</i> ,   | } by { | Mr. Garrick.  |
| MATTEO SIFFREDI, lord              |        | Mr. Sheridan. |
| high chancellor of <i>Sicily</i> , |        | Mr. Delane.   |
| Earl OSMOND, lord high             |        | Mr. Havard.   |
| constable of <i>Sicily</i> ,       |        |               |
| RODOLPHO, friend to TAN-           |        |               |
| CRED, and captain of the           |        |               |
| guards,                            |        |               |
| SIGISMUNDA, daughter of            |        |               |
| SIFFREDI,                          |        | Mrs. Cibber.  |
| LAURA, sister of RODOL-            |        |               |
| PHO, and friend to SI-             |        | Miss Budget.  |
| GISMUNDA,                          |        |               |

BARONS, OFFICERS, GUARDS, &c.

S C E N E.

The City of *Palermo* in *Sicily*.





*Tancred and Sigismunda.*

A

TRAGEDY.

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ACT I. SCENE I.

SIGISMUNDA, LAURA.

*Sig.* **A**H fatal day to *Sicily*! The king  
Approaches his last moments?

*Lau.* So 'tis fear'd.

*Sig.* The death of those distinguish'd by their station,  
But by their virtue more, awakes the mind

To

To solemn dread, and strikes a saddening awe :  
 Not that we grieve for them, but for ourselves,  
 Left to the toil of life---And yet the best  
 Are, by the playful children of this world,  
 At once forgot, as they had never been.

*Laura*, 'tis said---the heart is sometimes charged  
 With a prophetic sadness : Such, methinks,  
 Now hangs on mine. The king's approaching death  
 Suggests a thousand fears. What troubles thence  
 May throw the state once more into confusion,  
 What sudden changes in my father's house  
 May rise, and part me from my dearest *Tancred*,  
 Alarms my thought.

*Lau.* The fears of love-sick fancy !  
 Perverfely busy to torment it self.  
 But be assur'd, your father's steady friendship,  
 Join'd to a certain genius, that commands,  
 Not kneels to fortune, will support and cherish,  
 Here in the public eye of *Sicily*,  
 This---I may call him---his adopted son,  
 The noble *Tancred*, form'd to all his virtues.

*Sig.* Ah form'd to charm his daughter !---This fair  
 Has tempted far the chase. Is he not yet [morn  
 Return'd ?

*Lau.* No.---When your father to the king,  
 Who now expiring lies, was call'd in haste,  
 He sent each way his messengers to find him ;  
 With such a look of ardor and impatience,  
 As if this near event was to Count *Tancred*  
 Of more importance than I comprehend.

*Sig.* There lies, my *Laura*, o'er my *Tancred*'s birth.  
 A cloud I cannot pierce. With princely accost,  
 Nay, with respect, which oft I have observ'd,  
 Stealing at times submissive o'er his features,  
 In *Belmont*'s woods my father rear'd this youth---  
 Ah woods ! where first my artless bosom learnt

The sighs of love.---He gives him out the son  
 Of an old friend, a baron of *Apulia*,  
 Who in the late crusado bravely fell.  
 But then 'tis strange; is all his family  
 As well as father dead? and all their friends,  
 Except my sire, the generous good *Siffredi*?  
 Had he a mother, sister, brother left,  
 The last remain of kindred; with what pride,  
 What rapture, might they fly o'er th' earth and sea.  
 To claim this rising honour of their blood!  
 This bright unknown! this all accomplish'd youth!  
 Who charms---too much---the heart of *Sigismunda*!

*Laura*, perhaps your brother knows him better,  
 The friend and partner of his freest hours.  
 What says *Rodolpho*? Does he truly credit  
 The story of his birth?

*Lau.* He has sometimes  
 Like you, his doubts; yet, when maturely weigh'd  
 Believes it true. As for lord *Tancred*'s self,  
 He never entertain'd the slightest thought  
 That verg'd to doubt; but oft laments his state,  
 By cruel fortune so ill-pair'd to yours.

*Sig.* Merit like his, the fortune of the mind,  
 Beggars all wealth---Then to your brother, *Laura*,  
 He talks of me?

*Lau.* Of nothing else. Howe'er  
 The talk begin, it ends with *Sigismunda*.  
 Their morning, noontide, and their evening walks  
 Are full of you; and all the woods of *Belmont*  
 Inamour'd with your name---

*Sig.* Away, my friend;  
 You flatter---yet the dear delusion charms.

*Lau.* No, *Sigismunda*, 'tis the strictest truth,  
 Nor half the truth, I tell you. Even with fondness  
 My brother talks for ever of the passion, [him,  
 That fire's young *Tancred*'s breast. So much it strikes  
 He

He praises love as if he were a lover.  
 He blames the false pursuits of vagrant youth,  
 Calls them gay folly, a mistaken struggle  
 Against best-judging nature. Heaven, he says,  
 In lavish bounty form'd the heart for love ;  
 In love included all the finer feeds  
 Of honour, virtue, friendship, purest bliss —

*Sig.* Virtuous *Rodolpho* !

*Lau.* Then his pleasing theme

He varies to the praises of your lover---

*Sig.* And what, my *Laura*, says he on the subject?

*Lau.* He says that, tho he were not nobly born,  
 Nature has form'd him noble, generous, brave,  
 Truly magnanimous, and warmly scorning  
 Whatever bears the smallest taint of baseness :  
 That every easy virtue is his own ;  
 Not learnt by painful labour, but inspir'd,  
 Implanted in his soul---Chiefly one charm  
 He in his graceful character observes ;  
 That though his passions burn with high impatience,  
 And sometimes, from a noble heat of nature,  
 Are ready to fly off ; yet the least check  
 Of ruling reason brings them back to temper,  
 And gentle softness.

*Sig.* True! O true, *Rodolpho*!

Blest be thy kindred worth for loving his!  
 He is all warmth, all amiable fire,  
 All quick heroic ardor! temper'd soft  
 With gentleness of heart, and manly reason!  
 If virtue were to wear a human form,  
 To light it with her dignity and flame,  
 Then softning mix her smiles and tender graces ;  
 O she would chuse the person of my *Tancred* !  
 Go on my friend, go on, and ever praise him ;  
 The subject knows no bounds, nor can I tire,  
 While my breast trembles to that sweetest music !



The heart of woman tastes no truer joy,  
 Is never flatter'd with such dear enchantment---  
 'Tis more than selfish vanity---as when  
 She hears the praises of the man she loves---  
*Lau.* Madam your father comes.

## SCENE II.

SIFREDI, SIGISMUNDA, LAURA.

*Siff.* [To an attendant as he enters.  
 Lord Tancred then

Is found ?

*Atten.* My lord, he quickly will be here,  
 I scarce could keep before him, tho he bid me  
 Speed on, to say he would attend your orders. [me.

*Siff.* 'Tis well -- retire -- You, too, my daughter, leave

*Sig.* I go, my father -- But how fares the king ?

*Siff.* He is no more. Gone to that awful state,  
 Where kings the crown wear only of their virtues.

*Sig.* How bright must then be his ! -- This stroke is  
 He was this morning well, when to the chace [sudden.  
 Lord Tancred went.

*Siff.* 'Tis true. But at his years  
 Death gives short notice -- Drooping nature then,  
 Without a gust of pain to shake it, falls.  
 His death, my daughter, was that happy period  
 Which few attain. The duties of his day  
 Were all discharg'd, and gratefully enjoy'd  
 It's noblest blessings ; calm as evening skies,  
 Was his pure mind, and lighted up with hopes  
 That open heaven ; when, for his last long sleep  
 Timely prepar'd a lassitude of life,  
 A pleasing weariness of mortal joy,

Fell



260 T A N C R E D *and*

Fell on his soul, and down he sunk to rest.  
O may my death be such! — He but one wish  
Left unfulfill'd, which was to see count *Tancred*—

*Sig.* To see count *Tancred*!—Pardon me, my lord—

*Siff.* For what, my daughter?—But with such emotion,  
Why did you start at mention of count *Tancred*?

*Sig.* Nothing—I only hop'd the dying king  
Might mean to make some generous just provision  
For this your worthy charge, this noble orphan.

*Siff.* And he has done it largely—Leave me now—  
I want some private conference with lord *Tancred*.

S C E N E III.

*SIFFREDI alone.*

My doubts are but too true—If these old eyes  
Can trace the marks of love, a mutual passion  
Has seiz'd, I fear my daughter and this prince,  
My sovereign now---Should it be so? Ah there,  
There lurks a brooding tempest, that may shake  
My long concerted scheme to settle firm  
The public peace and welfare, which the king  
Has made the prudent basis of his will—  
Away! unworthy views! you shall not tempt me!  
Nor interest, nor ambition shall seduce  
My fixt resolve—perish the selfish thought,  
Which our own good prefers to that of millions!—  
He comes—my king—unconscious of his fortune.

S C E N E IV. T A N C R E D, S I F F R E D I.

*Tanc.* My lord *Siffredi*, in your looks I read,  
Confirm'd, the mournful news that fly abroad  
From tongue to tongue---We then at last, have lost  
The good old king?

*Siff.*

*Siff.*

Yes, we have lost a father !

The greatest blessing heaven bestows on mortals,  
And seldom found amidst these wilds of time.

A good, a worthy king !---Hear me, my *Tancred*,  
And I will tell thee in a few plain words,  
How he deserved that best, that glorious title.

'Tis nought complex, 'tis clear as truth and virtue.

He lov'd, his people, deem'd them all his children ;  
The good exalted and depress'd the bad.

He spurn'd the flattering crew, with scorn rejected

Their smooth advice that only means themselves,

Their schemes to aggrandize him into baseness :

Nor did he less disdain the secret breath,

The whisper'd tale, that blights a virtuous name.

He sought alone the good of those for whom

He was entrusted with the sovereign power :

Well knowing that a people in their rights

And industry protected ; living safe

Beneath the sacred shelter of the laws,

Encourag'd in their genius, arts, and labours,

And happy each as he himself deserves,

Are ne'er ungrateful. With unsparing hand

They will for him provide : their filial love

And confidence are his unfailing treasure,

And every honest man his faithful guard.

*Tanc.* A general face of grief o'erspreads the city.

I mark'd the people, as I hither came,

In crouds assembled, struck with silent sorrow,

And pouring forth the noblest praise of tears.

Those, whom remembrance of their former woes,

And long experience of the vain illusions

Of youthful hope, and into wise consent

And fear of change corrected, wrung their hands,

And often casting up their eyes to heaven

Gave sign of sad conjecture. Others shew'd,

Athwart their grief, or real or affected,

*Siff.*

A gleam

A gleam of expectation, from what chance  
And change might bring. A mingled murmur run  
Along the streets ; and, from the lonely court  
Of him who can no more assist their fortunes,  
I saw the courtier-fry, with eager haste,  
All hurrying to *Constantia*.

*Siff.* Noble youth !

I joy to hear from thee these just reflections,  
Worthy of riper years---But if they seek  
*Constantia*, trust me, they mistake their course.

*Tanc.* How ! Is she not my lord the late king's sister,  
Heir to the crown of *Sicily* ? the last  
Of our fam'd *Norman* line, and now our queen ?

*Siff.* *Tancred*, 'tis true ; she is the late king's sister,  
The sole surviving offspring of that tyrant  
*William the bad*---so for his vices stil'd ;  
Who spilt much noble blood, and sore oppress'd  
Th' exhausted land : whence grievous wars arose,  
And many a dire convulsion shook the state.  
When he, whose death *Sicilia* mourns to-day,  
*William*, who has and well deserved the name  
Of *Good*, succeeding to his father's throne,  
Reliev'd his country's woes---But to return---  
She is the late king's sister, born some months  
After the tyrant's death, but not next heir.

*Tanc.* You much surprize me---May I then presume  
To ask who is ?

*Siff.* Come nearer, noble *Tancred*,  
Son of my care ! I must, on this occasion,  
Consult thy generous heart ; which when conducted  
By rectitude of mind and honest virtues,  
Gives better counsel than the hoary head---  
Then know, there lives a prince, here in *Palermo*,  
The lineal offspring of our famous hero,  
*Roger* the first.

*Tanc.* Great heaven !---how far remov'd

From

From that our mighty founder?

*Siff.* His great grandson :  
Sprung from his eldest son, who died untimely,  
Before his father.

*Tanc.* Ha ! the prince you mean  
Is he not *Manfred's* son ? The generous, brave,  
Unhappy *Manfred* ! whom the tyrant *William*,  
You just now mention'd, not content to spoil  
Of his paternal crown, threw into fetters,  
And infamously murder'd.

*Siff.* Yes—the same.

*Tanc.* By heavens ! I joy to find our *Norman* reign,  
The world's sole light amidst these barbarous ages !  
Yet rears its head ; and shall not, from the lance,  
Pass to the feeble distaff——But this prince  
Where has he lain conceal'd ?

*Siff.* The late good king,  
By noble pity mov'd, contriv'd to save him  
From his dire father's unrelenting rage ;  
And had him rear'd in private, as became  
His birth and hopes, with high and princely nurture.  
Till now, too young to rule a troubled state,  
By civil broils most miserably torn,  
He in his safe retreat has lain conceal'd,  
His birth and fortune to himself unknown ;  
But when the dying king to me entrusted,  
As to the chancellor of the realm, his will,  
His successor he nam'd him.

*Tanc.* Happy youth !  
He then will triumph o'er his father's foes,  
O'er haughty *Osmond*, and the tyrant's daughter.

*Siff.* Ay, that is what I dread—that heat of youth ;  
There lurks, I fear, perdition to the state,  
I dread the horrors of rekindled war :  
Tho dead, the tyrant still is to be fear'd ;  
His daughter's party still is strong, and numerous :  
Her



Her friend, earl *Osmond*, constable of *Sicily*,  
 Experienc'd, brave, high-born, of mighty interest.  
 Better the prince and princess should by marriage  
 Unite their friends, their interest and their claims;  
 Then will the peace and welfare of the land  
 On a firm basis rise.

*Tanc.* My lord *Siffredi*,  
 If by myself I of this prince may judge,  
 That scheme will scarce succeed—Your prudent age  
 In vain will counsel, if the heart forbid it—  
 But wherefore fear? The right is clearly his;  
 And, under your direction, with each man  
 Of worth and steadfast loyalty, to back  
 At once the king's appointment and his birthright,  
 There is no ground for fear. They have great odds,  
 Against the astonish'd sons of violence,  
 Who fight with awful justice on their side.  
 All *Sicily* will rouse, all faithful hearts  
 Will range themselves around prince *Manfred's* son.  
 For me, I here devote me to the service  
 Of this young prince; I every drop of blood  
 Will lose with joy, with transport, in his cause—  
 Pardon my warmth—but that my lord, will never  
 To this decision come—Then find the prince;  
 Lose not a moment to awaken in him  
 The royal soul. Perhaps he now desponding  
 Pines in a corner and laments his fortune;  
 That in the narrower bounds of private life  
 He must confine his aims, those swelling virtues  
 Which from his noble father he inherits.

*Siff.* Perhaps, regardless, in the common bane  
 Of youth he melts, in vanity and love.  
 But if the seeds of virtue glow within him,  
 I will awake a higher sense, a love  
 That grasps the loves and happiness of millions.



*Tanc.* Why that surmise? Or should he love, *Siffredi*,  
 I doubt not, it is nobly, which will raise  
 And animate his virtues — O permit me  
 To plead the cause of youth---Their virtue oft,  
 In pleasure's soft enchantment lull'd a while,  
 Forgets itself; it sleeps and gayly dreams,  
 Till great occasion rouse it: Then all flame,  
 It walks abroad with heighten'd soul and vigour,  
 And by the change astonishes the world.  
 Even with a kind of sympathy, I feel  
 The joy that waits this prince; when all the powers,  
 Th' expanding heart can wish, of doing good;  
 Whatever swells ambition, or exalts  
 The human soul into divine emotions,  
 All croud at once upon him.

*Siff.* Ah, my *Tancred*,  
 Nothing so easy as in speculation,  
 And at a distance seen the course of honour,  
 A fair delightful champain strew'd with flowers.  
 But when the practice comes; when our fond passions,  
 Pleasure, and pride, and self-indulgence, throw  
 Their magic dust around, the prospect roughens:  
 Then dreadful passes, craggy mountains rise,  
 Cliffs to be scal'd, and torrents to be stem'd:  
 Then toil ensues, and perseverance stem;  
 And endless combats with our grosser sense,  
 Oft lost, and oft renew'd; and generous pain  
 For others felt; and, harder lesson still!  
 Our honest bliss for others sacrific'd;  
 And all the rugged task of virtue quails  
 The stoutest heart of common resolution.  
 Few get above this turbid scene of strife,  
 Few gain the summit, breathe that purest air,  
 That heavenly ether, which untroubled sees  
 The storm of vice and passion rage below.

*Tanc.* Most true, my Lord. But why thus augure ill?

You seem to doubt this prince. I know him not.  
 Yet oh, methinks, my heart could answer for him!  
 The juncture is so high, so strong the gale  
 That blows from heaven, as through the deadeſt ſoul  
 Might breathe the godlike energy of virtue.

*Siff.* Hear him immortal ſhades of his great fathers!—

Forgive me, ſir, this trial of your heart:

Thou! Thou art he!

*Tanc.*

*Siffredi!*

*Siff.*

*Tancred, thou!*

Thou art the man of all the many thouſands  
 That toil upon the boſom of this iſle,  
 By heaven elected to command the reſt,  
 To rule, protect them, and to make them happy!

*Tanc.* *Manfred* my father! I the laſt ſupport  
 Of the ſam'd *Norman* line that awes the world!  
 I! who this morning wander'd forth an orphan,  
 Outcaſt of all but thee my ſecond father!  
 Thus call'd to glory to the firſt great lot  
 Of human kind—O wonder-working Hand  
 That in majeſtic ſilence, ſways at will  
 The mighty movements of unbounded nature;  
 O grant me Heaven! the virtues to ſuſtain  
 This awful burden of ſo many heroes!  
 Let me not be exalted into ſhame,  
 Set up the worthleſs pageant of vain grandeur.

Mean time I thank the juſtice of the king,  
 Who has my right bequeath'd me. Thee, *Siffredi*,  
 I thank thee—O I ne'er enough can thank thee!  
 Yes, thou haſt been—thou art—ſhalt be my father!  
 Thou ſhalt direct my unexperienc'd years,  
 Shalt be the ruling head, and I the hand.

*Siff.* It is enough for me—to ſee my ſovereign  
 Aſſert his virtues, and maintain his honour.

*Tanc.* I think, my lord you ſaid the king committed  
 To you his will. I hope it is not clogg'd

With

With any base conditions, any clause,  
 To tyrannize my heart, and to *Constantia*  
 Enslave my hand devoted to another.  
 The hint you just now gave of that alliance,  
 You must imagine, wakes my fear. But know,  
 In this alone I will not bear dispute,  
 Not even from thee, *Siffredi*!—Let the council  
 Be strait assembled, and the will there open'd:  
 Thence issue speedy orders to convene,  
 This day ere noon, the senate: where those barons,  
 Who now are in *Palermo*, will attend,  
 To pay their ready homage to the king,  
 Their rightful king who claims his native crown,  
 And will not be a king by deeds and parchments.

*Siff.* I go, my liege. But once again permit me  
 To tell you---Now, now, is the trying crisis,  
 That must determine of your future reign.  
 O with heroic rigour watch your heart!  
 And to the sovereign duties of the king,  
 Th' unequal'd pleasures of a God on earth,  
 Submit the common joys, the common passions,  
 Nay, even the virtues of the private man.

*Tanc.* Of that no more. They not oppose, but aid,  
 Invigorate, cherish, and reward each other.  
 The kind all ruling Wisdom is no tyrant.

## SCENE V.

TANCRED *alone.*

Now, generous *Sigismunda*, comes my turn  
 To shew my love was not of thine unworthy,  
 When fortune bade me blush to look to thee.  
 But what is fortune to the wish of love?  
 A miserable bankrupt! O 'tis poor,  
 Tis scanty all, whate'er we can bestow!

M 2

The

The wealth of kings is wretchedness and want!--  
Quick, let me find her! taste that highest joy,  
Th' exalted heart can know, the mixt effusion  
Of gratitude and love!--Behold, she comes!

## S C E N E VI.

TANCRED, SIGISMUNDA.

*Tanc.* My fluttering soul was all on wing to find thee,  
My love! my *Sigismunda*!

*Sig.* O my *Tancred*!

Tell me, what means this mystery and gloom  
That lowers around? Just now, involv'd in thought  
My father shot athwart me--You, my lord,  
Seem strangely mov'd--I fear some dark event  
From the king's death to trouble our repose,  
That tender calm we in the woods of *Belmont*  
So happily enjoy'd--Explain this hurry,  
What means it? Say.

*Tanc.* It means that we are happy!  
Beyond our most romantic wishes happy!

*Sig.* You but perplex me more.

*Tanc.* It means, my fairest!  
That thou art queen of *Sicily*; and I  
The happiest of mankind! than monarch more!  
Because with thee I can adorn my throne.  
*Manfred*, who fell by tyrant *William's* rage,  
Fam'd *Roger's* lineal issue, was my father.

[*Pausing.*]

You droop, my love; dejected on a sudden;  
You seem to mourn my fortune--The soft tear  
Springs in thy eye--O let me kiss it off--  
Why this, my *Sigismunda*?

*Sig.* Royal *Tancred*,  
None at your glorious fortune can like me  
Rejoice;--yet me alone, of all *Sicilians*,



It makes unhappy.

*Tanc.*

I should hate it then !

Should throw, with scorn, the splendid ruin from me :-

No, *Sigismunda* 'tis my hope with thee

To share it, whence it draws its richest value.

*Sig.* You are my sovereign — I at humble distance —

*Tanc.* Thou art my queen ! the sovereign of my soul !

You never reign'd with such triumphant lustre,

Such winning charms as now ; yet, thou art still

The dear, the tender, generous *Sigismunda* !

Who, with a heart exalted far above

Those selfish views that charm the common breast,

Stoop'd from the height of life and courted beauty,

Then, then, to love me, when I seem'd of fortune

The hopeless outcast, when I had no friend,

None to protect and own me but thy father.

And would'st thou claim all goodness to thyself ?

Canst thou thy *Tancred* deem so dully form'd,

Of such gross clay, just as I reach the point —

A point my wildest hopes could never image —

In that great moment, full of every virtue,

That I should then so mean a traitor prove

To the best bliss and honour of mankind,

So much disgrace the human heart, as then,

For the dead form of flattery and pomp,

The faithless joys of courts, to quit kind truth,

The cordial sweets of friendship and of love,

The life of life ! my all, my *Sigismunda* !

I could upbraid thy fears, call them unkind,

Cruel, unjust, an outrage to my heart,

Did they not spring from love.

*Sig.*

Think not, my lord,

That to such vulgar doubts I can descend.

Your heart, I know, disdains the little thought

Of changing with the vain external change

Of circumstance and fortune. Rather thence

M 3

It



It would, with rising ardor, greatly feel  
 A noble pride to shew itself the same.  
 But, ah! the hearts of kings are not their own.  
 There is a haughty duty that subjects them  
 To chains of state, to wed the public welfare,  
 And not indulge the tender private virtues.  
 Some high-descended princess, who will bring  
 New power and interest to your throne demands  
 Your royal hand — perhaps *Constantia* —

*Tanc.*

She!

O name her not! Were I this moment free,  
 And disengag'd as he who never felt  
 The powerful eye of beauty, never sigh'd  
 For matchless worth like thine, I should abhor  
 All thoughts of that alliance. Her fell father  
 Most basely murder'd mine; and she, his daughter,  
 Supported by his barbarous party still,  
 His pride inherits, his imperious spirit,  
 And insolent pretensions to my throne.  
 And canst thou deem me then so poorly tame,  
 So cool a traitor to my father's blood,  
 As from the prudent cowardice of state  
 E'er to submit to such a base proposal?  
 Detested thought! O doubly, doubly hateful!  
 From the two strongest passions; from aversion  
 To this *Constantia* — and from love to thee.

Custom, 'tis true, a venerable tyrant,  
 O'er servile man extends her blind dominion:  
 The pride of kings enslaves them; their ambition,  
 Or interest, lords it o'er the better passions.  
 But vain their talk, mask'd under specious words  
 Of station, duty, and of public good:  
 They whom just heaven has to a throne exalted,  
 To guard the rights and liberties of others,  
 What duty binds them to betray their own?  
 For me, my free-born heart shall bear no dictates,

But

But those of truth and honour ; wear no chains,  
 But the dear chains of love and *Sigismunda* !  
 Or if indeed my choice must be directed  
 By views of public good, whom shall I chuse  
 So fit to grace, to dignify a crown,  
 And beam sweet mercy on a happy people,  
 As thee, my love ? whom place upon my throne  
 But thee, descended from the good *Siffredi* ?  
 'Tis fit that heart be thine, which drew from him  
 What e'er can make it worthy thy acceptance.

*Sig.* Cease, cease, to raise my hopes above my duty.  
 Charm me no more, my *Tancred* ! — O that we  
 In those blest woods, where first you won my soul,  
 Had pass'd our gentle days ; far from the toil  
 And pomp of courts ! Such is the wish of love ;  
 Of love, that, with delightful weakness, knows  
 No blifs and no ambition but itself.  
 But, in the world's full light, those charming dreams,  
 Those fond illusions vanish. Awful duties,  
 The tyranny of men, even your own heart,  
 Where lurks a sense your passion stifles now,  
 And proud imperious honour call you from me.  
 'Tis all in vain---You cannot hush a voice  
 That murmurs here---I must not be persuaded !

*Tancred, kneeling.*

Hear me, thou soul of all my hopes and wishes !  
 And witness, heaven ! prime source of love and joy !  
 Not a whole warring world combin'd against me ;  
 Its pride, its splendor, its imposing forms,  
 Nor interest, nor ambition, nor the face  
 Of solemn state, not even thy father's wisdom,  
 Shall ever shake my faith to *Sigismunda* !

[*Trumpets and acclamations heard.*

But, hark ! the public voice to duties call me,  
 Which with unweary'd zeal I will discharge ;  
 And thou, yes thou, shalt be my bright reward —

Yet -- ere I go -- to hush thy lovely fears,

Thy delicate objections — [writes his name.

Take this blank,

Sign'd with my name, and give it to thy father :

Tell him 'tis my command, it be fill'd up

With a most strict and solemn marriage-contract.

How dear each tie ! how charming to my soul !

That more unites me to my *Sigismunda*.

For thee and for my people's good to live,

Is all the bliss which sovereign power can give.

*End of the first Act.*

## A C T II. S C E N E I.

SIFFREDI *alone.*

SO far 'tis well -- The late king's will proceeds  
Upon the plan I counsel'd ; that prince *Tancred*  
Shall make *Constantia* partner of his throne.

O great, O wish'd event ! whence the dire seeds  
Of dark intestine broils, of civil war,  
And all its dreadful miseries and crimes,  
Shall be for ever rooted from the land.

May these dim eyes, long blasted by the rage  
Of cruel faction and my country's woes,  
Tir'd with the toils and vanities of life,  
Behold this period, then be clos'd in peace !

But how this mighty obstacle surmount,  
Which love has thrown betwixt ? Love, that disturbs  
The schemes of wisdom still ; that wing'd with passion,  
Blind and impetuous in its fond pursuits,  
Leaves the grey-headed reason far behind.  
Alas ! how frail the state of human bliss !  
When even our honest passions oft destroy it.

I was

I was to blame, in solitude and shades,  
Infectious scenes ! to trust their youthful hearts.  
Would I had mark'd the rising flame ! that now  
Burns out with dangerous force---My daughter owns  
Her passion for the king ; she trembling own'd it,  
With prayers and tears and tender supplications,  
That almost shook my firmness---And this blank,  
Which his rash fondness gave her, shews how much,  
To what a wild extravagance he loves---  
I see no means---it foils my deepest thought---  
How to controul this madness of the king,  
That wears the face of virtue, and will thence  
Disdain restraint, will from his generous heart  
Borrow new rage, even speciously oppose  
To reason reason---But it must be done.  
My own advice, of which I more and more  
Approve, the strict conditions of the will,  
Highly demand his marriage with *Constantia* ;  
Or else her party has a fair pretence,---  
And all, at once, is horror and confusion---  
How issue from this maze ?---The crowding barons  
Here summon'd to the palace, meet already,  
To pay their homage, and confirm the will.  
On a few moments hangs the public fate,  
On a few hasty moments---Ha ! there shone  
A gleam of hope---Yes---with this very paper  
I yet will save him---Necessary means  
For good and noble ends can ne'er be wrong.  
In that resitless, that peculiar case,  
Deceit is truth and virtue---But how hold  
This lion in the toil ?---O I will form it  
Of such a fatal thread, twist it so strong  
With all the ties of honour and of duty,  
That his most desperate fury shall not break  
The honest snare---Here is the royal hand---  
I will beneath it write a perfect, full,



And absolute agreement to the will ;  
 Which read before the nobles of the realm  
 Assembled, in the sacred face of *Sicily*,  
*Constantia* present, every heart and eye  
 Fix'd on their monarch, every tongue applauding,  
 He must submit, his dream of love must vanish---  
 It shall be done !---To me, I know, 'tis ruin ;  
 But safety to the public, to the king.  
 I will not reason more, I will not listen  
 Even to the voice of honour---No---'tis fix'd !  
 I here devote me for my prince and country ;  
 Let them be safe, and let me nobly perish !

Behold earl *Osmond* comes ; without whose aid  
 My schemes are all in vain.

## S C E N E II.

OSMOND, SIFFREDI.

*Os.* My lord *Siffredi*,  
 I from the council hasten'd to *Constantia*,  
 And have accomplish'd what we there propos'd.  
 The princess to the will submits her claims.  
 She with her presence means to grace the senate,  
 And of your royal charge young *Tancred's* hand  
 Accept. At first indeed, it shock'd her hopes  
 Of reigning sole, this new surprising scene  
 Of *Manfred's* son, appointed by the king  
 With her joint-heir---But I so fully shew'd  
 The justice of the case, the public good  
 And sure establish'd peace which thence would rise,  
 Join'd to the strong necessity that urg'd her,  
 If on *Sicilia's* throne she meant to sit,  
 As to the wise disposal of the will  
 Her high ambition tam'd. Methought, besides,  
 I could discern that not from prudence merely  
 She to this choice submitted.

*Siff.*



*Siff.*Noble *Osmond*,

You have in this done to the public great  
And signal service. Yes, I must avow it;  
This frank and ready instance of your zeal,  
In such a trying crisis of the state,  
When interest and ambition might have warp'd  
Your views; I own, this truly generous virtue  
Upbraids the rashness of my former judgment.

*Osmond*. *Siffredi*, no.---To you belongs the praise;  
The glorious work is yours. Had I not seiz'd,  
Improv'd the wish'd occasion to root out  
Division from the land, and save my country,  
I had been base, been infamous for ever.  
'Tis you, my lord, to whom the many thousands,  
That by the barbarous sword of civil war  
Had fallen inglorious, owe their lives; to you  
The sons of this fair *Isle*, from her first peers  
Down to the swain who tills her golden plains,  
Owe their safe homes, their soft domestic hours,  
And thro' late time posterity shall bless you,  
You who advis'd this will---I blush to think,  
I have so long oppos'd the best good man  
In *Sicily*---With what impartial care  
Ought we to watch o'er prejudice and passion,  
Nor trust too much the jaundic'd eye of party!  
Henceforth its vain delusions I renounce,  
Its hot determinations, that confine  
All merit and all virtue to itself.  
To yours I join my hand; with you will own  
No interest and no party but my country.  
Nor is your friendship only my ambition:  
There is a dearer name, the name of father,  
By which I should rejoice to call *Siffredi*.  
Your daughter's hand would to the public weal  
Unite my private happiness.

*Siff.*

My lord,

You have my glad consent. To be allied

To

*Siff.*

To your distinguish'd family, and merit,  
I shall esteem an honour. From my soul  
I here embrace earl *Osmond* as my friend,  
And son.

*Osmon.* You make him happy. This assent,  
So frank and warm, to what I long have wish'd,  
Engages all my gratitude ; at once,  
In the first blossom, it matures our friendship.  
I from this moment vow myself thy friend,  
And zealous servant of *Siffredi's* house.

*Enter an officer belonging to the court.*

*Officer to Siffredi.*

The king, my lord, demands your speedy presence.

*Siff.* I will attend him strait---Farewel, my lord :  
The senate meets ; there, a few moments hence,  
I will rejoin you.

*Osmon.* There my noble lord,  
We will compleat this salutary work,  
Will there begin a new auspicious æra.

### S C E N E III.

*Osmond* alone.

*Siffredi* gives his daughter to my wishes —  
But does she give herself? Gay, young, and flatter'd,  
Perhaps engag'd, will she her youthful heart  
Yield to my harsher, uncomplying years?  
I am not form'd, by flattery and praise,  
By sighs and tears, and all the whining trade  
Of love, to feed a fair-one's vanity ;  
To charm at once and spoil her. These soft arts  
Nor suit my years nor temper ; these be left  
To boys and doting age. A prudent father,  
By nature charg'd to guide and rule her choice,  
Resigns his daughter to a husband's power,

Who

Who with superior dignity, with reason,  
And manly tenderness, will ever love her;  
Not first a kneeling slave, and then a tyrant.

## SCENE IV.

*Osmond, Barons.*

*Osmond.* My lords, I greet you well. This wondrous day  
Unites us all in amity and friendship.  
We meet to-day with open hearts and looks,  
Not gloom'd by party, scouling on each other,  
But all the children of one happy isle,  
The social sons of liberty. No pride,  
No passion now, no thwarting views divide us :  
Prince *Manfred's* line, at last, to *William's* join'd,  
Combines us in one family of brothers.  
This to the late good king's well-order'd will,  
And wise *Siffredi's* generous care we owe.  
I truly give you joy. First of you all,  
I here renounce those errors and divisions  
That have so long disturb'd our peace, and seem'd,  
Fermenting still, to threaten new commotions---  
By time instructed let us not disdain  
To quit mistakes. We all, my lords, have err'd.  
Men may, I find, be honest, tho' they differ.

1st. *Bar.* Who follows not, my lord, the fair example  
You set us all, whate'er be his pretence,  
Loves not with single and unbiafs'd heart  
His country as he ought.

2d. *Bar.* O beauteous peace !  
Sweet union of a state ! What else, but thou,  
Gives safety, strength, and glory to the people !  
I bow, lord conitable, beneath the snow  
Of many years ; yet in my breast revives  
A youthful flame. Methinks, I see again  
Those gentle days renew'd, that bless'd our isle,

Ere

Ere by this wasteful fury of division,  
 Worse than our *Ætna's* most destructive fires,  
 It desolated sunk. I see our plains  
 Unbounded waving with the gifts of harvest ;  
 Our seas with commerce throng'd, our busy ports  
 With chearful toil. Our *Enna* blooms afresh ;  
 Afresh the sweets of thymy *Hybla* flow.  
 Our nymphs and shepherds, sporting in each vale,  
 Inspire new song, and wake the pastoral reed---  
 The tongue of age is fond---Come, come, my sons ;  
 I long to see this prince of whom the world  
 Speaks largely well---His father was my friend,  
 The brave unhappy *Manfred*---Come, my lords ;  
 We tarry here too long.

## S C E N E V.

TWO OFFICERS, *keeping off the croud.*

*One of the croud.* Shew us our king,  
 The valiant *Manfred's* son, who lov'd the people---  
 We must, we will behold him---Give us way.

1st. *Of.* Pray, gentlemen, give back--it must not be--  
 Give back, I pray---on such a glad occasion  
 I would not ill entreat the lowest of you.

2d. *Man of the croud.* Nay, give us but a glimpse  
 of our young king.  
 We more than any baron of them all  
 Will pay him true allegiance.

2d. *Of.* Friends---indeed---  
 You cannot pass this way---We have strict orders,  
 To keep for him himself, and for the barons,  
 All these apartments clear---Go to the gate  
 That fronts the sea-- You there will find admission.

*All.* Long live king *Tancred!* *Manfred's* son---Huz-  
 za ! [*Croud goes off.*]

1st. *Of.* I do not marvel at their rage of joy :

He



He is a brave and amiable prince.  
 When in my lord *Siffredi's* house I liv'd,  
 Ere by his favor I obtain'd this office,  
 I there remember well the young Count *Tancred*.  
 To see him and to love him were the same.  
 He was so noble in his ways, yet still  
 So affable and mild---Well, well, old *Sicily*,  
 Yet happy days await thee!

2d. *Of.*

Grant it heaven!

We have seen sad and troublous times enough.  
 He is, they say, to wed the late king's sister,  
*Constantia*.

1st. *Of.*

Friend, of that I greatly doubt.

Or I mistake, or lord *Siffredi's* daughter  
 The gentle *Sigismunda* has his heart.  
 If one may judge by kindly cordial looks,  
 And fond assiduous care to please each other,  
 Most certainly they love---O be they blest,  
 As they deserve! It were great pity aught  
 Should part a matchless pair: the glory he,  
 And she the blooming grace of *Sicily*!

2d. *Of.* My lord *Rodolpho* comes.

## SCENE VI.

RODOLPHO, *from the senate.*

*Rod.*

My honest friends,

You may retire.

[*Officers go out.*]

A storm is in the wind.

This Will perplexes all. No, *Tancred* never  
 Can stoop to these conditions, which at once  
 Attack his rights, his honour, and his love.  
 Those wise old men, those plodding grave state pedants,  
 Forget the course of youth; their crooked prudence,  
 To baseness verging still, forgets to take  
 Into their fine-spun schemes the generous heart,

That



That thro' the cobweb system bursting lays  
 Their labours waste---So will this business prove,  
 Or I mistake the king---back from the pomp  
 He seem'd at first to shrink; and round his brow  
 I mark'd a gathering cloud, when by his side,  
 As if design'd to share the public homage,  
 He saw the tyrant's daughter. But confess'd,  
 At least to me, the doubling tempest frown'd,  
 And shook his swelling bosom, when he heard  
 Th' unjust, the base conditions of the will.  
 Uncertain, tost in cruel agitation,  
 He oft, methought, address'd himself to speak  
 And interrupt *Siffredi*; who appear'd  
 With conscious haste, to dread that interruption,  
 And hurry'd on---But hark! I hear a noise,  
 As if th' assembly rose.---Ha! *Sigismunda*,  
 Oppress'd with grief and wrapt in pensive sorrow,  
 Passes along---

*Sigismunda and attendants pass thro' the  
 back scene. Laura advances.*

## S C E N E VII.

RODOLPHO, LAURA.

*Law.* Your high-prais'd friend, the king,  
 Is false, most vilely false! The meanest slave  
 Had shown a nobler heart; nor grossly thus,  
 By the first bait ambition spread, been gull'd.  
 He *Manfred's* son! away! it cannot be!  
 The son of that brave prince could ne'er betray  
 Those rights so long usurp'd from his great fathers,  
 Which he, this day, by such amazing fortune,  
 Had just regain'd; he ne'er could sacrifice  
 All faith, all honour, gratitude and love,  
 Even just resentment of his father's fate,  
 And pride itself; whate'er exalts a man

Above

Above the groveling sons of peasant-mud,  
 All in a moment—And for what? why truly,  
 For kind permission, gracious leave, to sit  
 On his own throne with tyrant *William's* daughter!

*Rod.* I stand amaz'd—You surely wrong him, *Laura*.  
 There must be some mistake.

*Lau.* There can be none!

*Siffredi* read his full and free consent  
 Before th' applauding senate. True indeed,  
 A small remain of shame, a timorous weakness,  
 Even dastardly in falshood made him blush  
 To act this scene in *Sigismunda's* eye,  
 Who sunk beneath his perfidy and baseness.  
 Hence, till to-morrow he adjourn'd the senate—  
 To-morrow fix'd with infamy to crown him!  
 Then, leading off his gay triumphant princess  
 He left the poor unhappy *Sigismunda*,  
 To bend her trembling steps to that sad home  
 His faithless vows will render hateful to her—  
 He comes—Farewel—I cannot bear his presence!

## S C E N E VIII.

TANCRED, SIFFREDI, RODOLPHO.

TANCRED *entering to* SIFFREDI.

Avoid me, hoary traitor!——Go, *Rodolpho*,  
 Give orders that all passages this way  
 Be shut--Defend me from a hateful world,  
 The bane of peace and honour---then return--  
 What! dost thou haunt me still? O monstrous insult!  
 Unparallel'd indignity! Just heaven!  
 Was ever king, was ever man so treated?  
 So trampled into baseness!

*Siff.*

*Siff.* Here, my liege,  
Here strike! I nor deserve, nor ask for mercy.

*Tanc.* Distraction!--O my soul--Hold, reason, hold  
Thy giddy seat--O this inhuman outrage  
Unhinges thought!

*Siff.* Exterminate thy servant!

*Tanc.* All, all but this I could have borne--but this!  
This daring insolence beyond example!  
This murderous stroke that stabs my peace for ever!  
That wounds me there---there! where the human heart  
Most exquisitely feels---

*Siff.* O bear it not,  
My royal lord! appease on me your vengeance!

*Tanc.* Did ever tyrant image aught so cruel!  
The lowest slave that crawls upon the earth,  
Robb'd of each comfort heaven bestows on mortals,  
On the bare ground, has still his virtue left,  
The sacred treasures of an honest heart,  
Which thou hast dar'd, with rash audacious hand,  
And impious fraud, in me to violate---

*Siff.* Behold, my liege, that rash audacious hand,  
Which not repents its crime---O glorious! happy!  
If by my ruin I can save your honour.

*Tanc.* Such honour I renounce! with sovereign scorn  
Greatly detest it, and its mean adviser!  
Hast thou not dar'd beneath my name to shelter---  
My name for other purposes design'd,  
Given from the fondness of a faithful heart,  
With the best love o'erflowing---hast thou not  
Beneath thy sovereign's name basely presum'd  
To shield a lie? a lie! in public utter'd,  
To all deluded *Sicily*? But know,  
This poor contrivance is as weak as base.  
In such a wretched toil none can be held  
But fools and cowards---O thy flimsy arts,

Touch'd

Touch'd by my just, my burning indignation,  
 Shall burst like threads in flame!--Thy doating prudence  
 But more secures the purpose it would shake.  
 Had my resolves been wavering and doubtful,  
 This would confirm them, make them fix'd as fate;  
 This adds the only motive that was wanting  
 To urge them on thro war and desolation—  
 What! marry her! *Constantia*! Her! the daughter  
 Of the fell tyrant who destroy'd my father!  
 The very thought is madness! Ere thou see'st  
 The torch of *Hymen* light these hated nuptials,  
 Thou shalt behold *Sicilia* wrapt in flames,  
 Her cities raz'd, her valleys drench'd with slaughter—  
 Love set aside—my pride assumes the quarrel.  
 My honour now is up; in spite of thee,  
 A world combin'd against me, I will give  
 This scatter'd Will in fragments to the winds,  
 Assert my rights, the freedom of my heart,  
 Crush all who dare oppose me to the dust,  
 And heap perdition on thee!

*Siff.* Sir, 'tis just.

Exhaust on me your rage; I claim it all.  
 But for these public threats thy passion utters,  
 'Tis what thou canst not do!

*Tanc.* I cannot! ha!

Driven to the dreadful brink of such dishonour,  
 Enough to make the tamest coward brave,  
 And into fierceness rouse the mildest nature,  
 What shall arrest my vengeance? who?

*Siff.* Thy self!

*Tanc.* Away! dare not to justify thy crime!  
 That, that alone can aggravate its horror,  
 Add insolence to insolence—perhaps  
 May make my rage forget—

*Siff.* O let it burst

On



On this grey head devoted to thy service!  
 But when the storm has vented all its fury,  
 Thou then must hear—nay more, I know, thou wilt—  
 Wilt hear the calm, yet stronger voice of reason.  
 Thou must reflect that a whole people's safety,  
 The weal of trusted millions should bear down,  
 Thy self the judge, thy fondest partial pleasure.  
 Thou must reflect that there are other duties,  
 A nobler pride, a more exalted honour,  
 Superior pleasures far, that will oblige,  
 Compel thee, to abide by this my deed,  
 Unwarranted perhaps in common justice,  
 But which necessity, even virtue's tyrant,  
 With awful voice commanded—Yes, thou must,  
 In calmer hours, divest thee of thy love,  
 These common passions of the vulgar breast,  
 This boiling heat of youth, and be a king!  
 The lover of thy people!

*Tanc.*

Truths ill-employ'd!

Abus'd to colour guilt! a king! a king!  
 Yes, I will be a king, but not a slave!  
 In this will be a king! in this my people  
 Shall learn to judge how I will guard their rights,  
 When they behold me vindicate my own.  
 But have I, say, been treated like a king?—  
 Heavens! could I stoop to such outrageous usage,  
 I were a mean a shameless wretch, unworthy  
 To wield a scepter in a land of slaves,  
 A foil abhorr'd of virtue, should belye  
 My father's blood, belye those very maxims,  
 At other times, you taught my youth—*Siffredi!*

*[In a softened tone of voice.]*

*Siff.* Behold, my prince, behold thy poor old servant,  
 Whose darling care, these twenty years, has been  
 To nurse thee up to virtue; who for thee,  
 Thy glory and thy weal, renounces all,

All



All interest or ambition can pour forth;  
 What many a selfish father would pursue  
 Thro treachery and crimes: behold him here,  
 Bent on his feeble knees, to beg, conjure thee,  
 With tears to beg thee, to controul thy passion,  
 And save thyself, thy honour, and thy people!  
 Kneeling with me, behold the many thousands  
 To thy protection trusted: Fathers, mothers,  
 The sacred front of venerable age,  
 The tender virgin and the helpless infant;  
 The ministers of heaven, those, who maintain,  
 Around thy throne, the majesty of rule;  
 And those, whose labour, scorch'd by winds and sun,  
 Feeds the rejoicing public: see them all,  
 Here at thy feet, conjuring thee to save them,  
 From misery and war, from crimes and rapine!  
 Can there be aught, kind heaven! in self-indulgence  
 To weigh down these? This aggregate of love,  
 With which compar'd the dearest private passion  
 Is but the wasted dust upon the balance?  
 Turn not away—Oh is there not some part,  
 In thy great heart, so sensible to kindness,  
 And generous warmth, some nobler part, to feel  
 The prayers and tears of these, the mingled voice  
 Of heaven and earth!

*Tanc.*            There is! and thou hast touch'd it.  
 Rise, rise, *Siffredi*—Oh! thou hast undone me,  
 Unkind old man!—O ill-entreated *Tancred*!  
 Which way foe'er I turn, dishonour rears  
 Her hideous front—and misery and ruin!  
 Was it for this you took such care to form me?  
 For this imbued me, with the quickest sense  
 Of shame; these finer feelings, that ne'er vex  
 The common mass of mortals, dully happy  
 In blest insensibility? O rather  
 You should have fear'd my heart; taught me that power  
And

And splendid interest lord it still o'er virtue;  
 That, gilded by prosperity and pride,  
 There is no shame, no meanness: temper'd thus,  
 I had been fit to rule a venal world.  
 Alas! what meant thy wantonness of prudence?  
 Why have you rais'd this miserable conflict  
 Betwixt the duties of the king and man?  
 Set virtue against virtue?—Ah *Siffredi*!  
 'Tis thy superfluous, thy unfeeling wisdom,  
 That has involv'd me in a maze of error,  
 Almost beyond retreat—But hold, my soul,  
 Thy steady purpose—Toft by various passions,  
 To this eternal anchor keep—There is,  
 Can be no public without private virtue—  
 Then mark me well, observe what I command:  
 It is the sole expedient now remaining—  
 To-morrow when the senate meets again,  
 Unfold the whole, unravel the deceit;  
 Nor that alone, try to repair its mischief;  
 There all thy power, thy eloquence and interest  
 Exert, to reinstate me in my rights,  
 And from thy own dark snares to disembroil me—  
 Start not my lord—This must and shall be done!  
 Or here, our friendship ends—Howe'er disguis'd,  
 Whatever thy pretences, thou art a traitor.

*Siff.* I should indeed deserve the name of traitor,  
 And even a traitor's fate, had I so slightly,  
 From principles so weak, done what I did,  
 As e'er to disavow it—

*Tanc.*

Ha!

*Siff.*

My liege,

Expect not this—Tho practis'd long in courts,  
 I have not so far learn'd their subtle trade,  
 To veer obedient with each gust of passion.  
 I honour thee, I venerate thy orders,  
 But honour more my duty. Nought on earth

Shall

Shall ever shake me from that solid rock,  
Nor smiles nor frowns.—

*Tanc.* You will not then.

*Siff.* I cannot!

*Tanc.* Away! begone!---O my *Rodolpho*, come,  
And save me from this traitor!---Hence, I say,  
Avoid my presence strait! and, know, old man,  
Thou my worst foe beneath the mask of friendship,  
Who, not content to trample in the dust  
My dearest rights, dost with cool insolence  
Persist, and call it duty: hadst thou not  
A daughter that protects thee, thou shouldst feel  
The vengeance thou deserv'st---No reply!  
Away!

## SCENE IX.

TANCRED, RODOLPHO.

*Rod.* What can incense my prince so highly  
Against his friend *Siffredi*?

*Tanc.* Friend! *Rodolpho*?  
When I have told thee what this friend has done,  
How play'd me like a boy, a base-born wretch,  
Who had nor heart nor spirit! thou wilt stand  
Amaz'd, and wonder at my stupid patience.

*Rod.* I heard, with mixt astonishment and grief,  
The king's unjust dishonourable will,  
Void in itself---I saw you stung with rage,  
And writhing in the snare; just as I went,  
At your command, to wait you here---but that  
Was the king's deed, not his.

*Tanc.* O he advis'd it!  
These many years he has in secret hatch'd  
This black contrivance, glories in the scheme,  
And proudly plumes him with his traiterous virtue.

But

But that was nought, *Rodolpho*, nothing, nothing!  
 O that was gentle, blameless to what follow'd!  
 I had, my friend, to *Sigismunda* given,  
 To hush her fears, in the full gush of fondness,  
 A blank sign'd by my hand---and he---O heavens!  
 Was ever such a wild attempt---he wrote  
 Beneath my name an absolute compliance  
 To this detested Will; nay, dar'd to read it  
 Before my self, on my insulted throne  
 His idle pageant plac'd---O words are weak  
 To paint the pangs, the rage, the indignation;  
 That whirl'd from thought to thought my soul in tempest,  
 Now on the point to burst, and now by shame  
 Repress'd---But in the face of *Sicily*,  
 All mad with acclamation, what, *Rodolpho*,  
 What could I do? The sole relief that rose  
 To my distracted mind, was to adjourn  
 Th' assembly till to-morrow---But to-morrow  
 What can be done?---O it avails not what!  
 I care not what is done---My only care  
 Is how to clear my faith to *Sigismunda*.  
 She thinks me false! She cast a look that kill'd me!  
 O I am base in *Sigismunda's* eye!

The lowest of mankind, the most perfidious!

*Rod.* This was a strain of insolence indeed,  
 A daring outrage of so strange a nature,  
 As stuns me quite ----

*Tanc.* Curs'd be my timid prudence!  
 That dash'd not back, that moment, in his face,  
 The bold presumptuous lye---and curs'd this hand!  
 That from a start of poor dissimulation,  
 Led off my *Sigismunda's* hated rival.  
 Ah then! what, poison'd by the false appearance,  
 What, *Sigismunda*, were thy thoughts of me!  
 How, in the silent bitterness of soul,  
 How didst thou scorn me! hate mankind, thyself,

For



For trusting to the vows of faithless *Tancred*!  
 For such I seem'd--I was!--The thought distracts me!  
 I should have cast a flattering world aside,  
 Rush'd from my throne, before them all avow'd her,  
 The choice, the glory of my free-born heart,  
 And spurn'd the shameful fetters thrown upon it—  
 Instead of that — confusion! — what I did  
 Has clinch'd the chain, confirm'd *Siffredi*'s crime,  
 And fix'd me down to infamy!

*Rod.* My lord,

Blame not the conduct, which your situation  
 Tore from your tortur'd heart--What could you do?  
 Had you so circumstanc'd, in open senate,  
 Before th' astonish'd public, with no friends  
 Prepar'd, no party form'd, affronted thus  
 The haughty princess and her powerful faction,  
 Supported by this Will, the sudden stroke,  
 Abrupt and premature, might have recoil'd  
 Upon yourself, even your own friends revolted,  
 And turn'd at once the public scale against you.  
 Besides, consider, had you then detected  
 In its fresh guilt this action of *Siffredi*,  
 You must with signal vengeance have chastis'd  
 The treasonable deed — Nothing so mean  
 As weak insulted power that dares not punish.  
 And how would that have suited with your love?  
 His daughter present too? Trust me, your conduct,  
 Howe'er abhorrent to a heart like yours,  
 Was fortunate and wise — Not that I mean  
 E'er to advise submission —

*Tan.* Heavens! Submission!

Could I descend to bear it, even in thought,  
 Despise me, you, the world, and *Sigismunda*!  
 Submission! — No! — To-morrow's glorious light  
 Shall flash discovery on this scene of baseness.  
 Whatever be the risk, by heavens! to-morrow,  
 VOL. II. N I will



I will o'erturn the dirty lye-built schemes  
Of these old men, and shew my faithful senate,  
That *Manfred's* son knows to assert and wear,  
With undiminish'd dignity, that crown  
This unexpected day has plac'd upon him.

But this, my friend, these stormy gusts of pride  
Are foreign to my love—Till *Sigismunda*  
Be disabus'd, my breast is tumult all,  
And can obey no settled course of reason.  
I see her still, I feel her powerful image,  
That look, where with reproach complaint was mix'd,  
Big with soft woe and gentle indignation,  
Which seem'd at once to pity and to scorn me—  
O let me find her! I too long have left  
My *Sigismunda* to converse with tears,  
A prey to thoughts that picture me a villain.  
But ah! how, clogg'd with this accursed state,  
A tedious world, shall I now find access?  
Her father too—Ten thousand horrors croud  
Into the wild fantastic eye of love—  
Who knows what he may do? Come then, my friend,  
And by thy sister's hand O let me steal  
A letter to her bosom—I no longer  
Can bear her absence, by the just contempt  
She now must brand me with, inflam'd to madness.  
Fly, my *Rodolpho*, fly! engage thy sister  
To aid my letter, and this very evening  
Secure an interview---I would not bear  
This rack another day, not for my kingdom!  
Till then deep-plung'd in solitude and shades,  
I will not see the hated face of man.

Thought drives on thought, on passions passions roll;  
Her smiles alone can calm my raging soul.

*End of the Second Act.*

A C T

## ACT III. SCENE I.

SIGISMUNDA *alone, sitting in a disconsolate posture.*

**A** H tyrant prince ! ah more than faithless *Tancred* !  
 Ungenerous and inhuman in thy falshood !  
 Hadst thou, this morning, when my hopeless heart,  
 Submissive to my fortune and my duty,  
 Had so much spirit left, as to be willing  
 To give thee back thy vows, ah ! hadst thou then  
 Confess'd the sad necessity thy state  
 Impos'd upon thee, and with gentle friendship,  
 Since we must part at last, our parting soften'd ;  
 I should indeed—I should have been unhappy,  
 But not to this extream—Amidst my grief,  
 I had, with pensive pleasure, cherish'd still  
 The sweet remembrance of thy former love,  
 Thy image still had dwelt upon my soul,  
 And made our guiltless woes not undelightful.  
 But coolly thus—How couldst thou be so cruel ?—  
 Thus to revive my hopes, to soothe my love  
 And call forth all its tenderness, then sink me  
 In black despair—What unrelenting pride  
 Possess'd thy breast, that thou couldst bear unmov'd  
 To see me bent beneath a weight of shame ?  
 Pangs thou canst never feel ? How couldst thou drag me,  
 In barbarous triumph at a rival's car ?  
 How make me witness to a sight of horror ?  
 That hand, which, but a few short hours ago,  
 So wantonly abus'd my simple faith,  
 Before th' attesting world given to another,  
 Irrevocably given !—There was a time,  
 When the least cloud that hung upon my brow,  
 Perhaps imagin'd only, touch'd thy pity.

N 2

Then,

Then, brighten'd often by the ready tear,  
 Thy looks were softness all: then the quick heart,  
 In every nerve alive, forgot it self,  
 And for each other then we felt alone.  
 But now, alas! these tender days are fled;  
 Now thou can'st see me wretched, pierc'd with anguish,  
 With studied anguish of thy own creating,  
 Nor wet thy harden'd eye—Hold, let me think—  
 I wrong thee sure; thou canst not be so base,  
 As meanly in my misery to triumph—  
 What is it then?—Why should I search for pain?—  
 O 'tis as bad!—"Tis fickleness of nature,  
 'Tis sickly love extinguish'd by ambition—  
 Is there, kind heaven! no constancy in man?  
 No steadfast truth, no generous fix'd affection,  
 That can bear up against a selfish world?  
 No, there is none—Even *Tancred* is inconstant! [*Rising.*  
 Hence! let me fly this scene!—Whate'er I see,  
 These roofs, these walls, each object that surrounds me,  
 Are tainted with his vows—But whither fly?  
 The groves are worse, the soft retreat of *Belmont*,  
 Its deepening glooms, gay lawns, and airy summits,  
 Will wound my busy memory to torture,  
 And all its shades will whisper—faithless *Tancred*!  
 My father comes—How, sunk in this disorder,  
 Shall I sustain his presence?

## S C E N E II.

SIFFREDI, SIGISMUNDA.

*Siff.**Sigismunda.*

My dearest child! I grieve to find thee thus  
 A prey to tears. I know the powerful cause  
 From which they flow, and therefore can excuse them,  
 But not their wilful obstinate continuance.  
 Come, rouse thee then, call up thy drooping spirit,  
Come,

Come, wake to reason from this dream of love,  
And shew the world thou art *Siffredi's* daughter.

*Sig.* Alas ! I am unworthy of that name.

*Siff.* Thou art indeed to blame ; thou hast too rashly  
Engag'd thy heart, without a father's sanction.

But this I can forgive. The king has virtues,  
That plead thy full excuse ; nor was I void  
Of blame, to trust thee to those dangerous virtues.

Then dread not my reproaches. Tho he blames,  
Thy tender father pities more than blames thee.

Thou art my daughter still ; and, if thy heart  
Will now resume its pride, assert itself,

And greatly rise superior to this trial,

I to my warmest confidence again

Will take thee, and esteem thee more my daughter.

*Sig.* O you are gentler far than I deserve !

It is, it ever was, my darling pride,

To bend my soul to your supreme commands,

Your wisest will ; and tho, by love betray'd —

Alas ! and punish'd too—I have transgress'd.

The nicest bounds of duty, yet I feel

A sentiment of tenderness, a source

Of filial nature springing in my breast ;

That, should it kill me, shall controul this passion,

And make me all submission and obedience

To you, my honour'd lord, the best of fathers.

*Siff.* Come to my arms, thou comfort of my age !

Thou only joy and hope of these grey hairs !

Come ! let me take thee to a parent's heart ;

There with the kindly aid of my advice,

Even with the dew of these paternal tears,

Revive and nourish this becoming spirit---

Then thou dost promise me, my *Sigismunda*---

Thy father stoops to make it his request---

Thou wilt resign thy fond presumptuous hopes,

And henceforth never more indulge one thought



That in the light of love regards the king.

*Sig.* Hopes I have none !---those by this fatal day  
Are blasted all---But from my soul to banish,  
While weeping memory there retains her seat,  
Thoughts which the purest bosom might have cherish'd,  
Once my delight, now even in anguish charming,  
Is more, alas ! my lord, than I can promise.

*Siff.* Absence and time, the softner of our passions,  
Will conquer this. Mean time, I hope from thee  
A generous great effort ; that thou wilt now  
Exert thy utmost force, nor languish thus  
Beneath the vain extravagance of love.  
Let not thy father blush to hear it said,  
His daughter was so weak, e'er to admit  
A thought so void of reason, that a king  
Should to his rank, his honour and his glory,  
The high important duties of a throne,  
Even to his throne itself, madly prefer  
A wild romantic passion, the fond child  
Of youthful dreaming thought and vacant hours ;  
That he should quit his heaven appointed station,  
Desert his awful charge, the care of all  
The toiling millions which this isle contains ;  
Nay more, should plunge them into war and ruin :  
And all to sooth a sick imagination,  
A miserable weakness---Must for thee,  
To make thee blest, *Sicilia* be unhappy ?  
The king himself, lost to the nobler sense  
Of manly praise, become the piteous heroe  
Of some soft tale, and rush on sure destruction ?  
Canst thou, my daughter, let the monstrous thought  
Possess one moment thy perverted fancy ?  
Rouse thee, for shame ! and if a spark of virtue  
Lies slumbering in thy soul, bid it blaze forth ;  
Nor sink unequal to the glorious lesson,  
This day thy lover gave thee from his throne.



*Sig.* Ah, that was not from virtue! ---Had, my father,  
That been his aim, I yield to what you say;  
'Tis powerful truth, unanswerable reason.  
Then, then, with sad but duteous resignation,  
I had submitted as became your daughter;  
But in that moment, when my humbled hopes  
Were to my duty reconcil'd, to raise them  
To yet a fonder height than e'er they knew,  
Then rudely dash them down---There is the sting!  
The blasting view is ever present to me---  
Why did you drag me to a fight so cruel?

*Siff.* It was a scene to fire thy emulation.

*Sig.* It was a scene of perfidy!---But know,  
I will do more than imitate the king---  
For he is false!---I, tho sincerely pierc'd  
With the best, truest passion, ever touch'd  
A virgin's breast, here vow to heaven and you,  
Tho from my heart I cannot, from my hopes  
To cast this prince---What would you more, my father?

*Siff.* Yes, one thing more--thy father then is happy.

Tho by the voice of innocence and virtue  
Absolv'd, we live not to ourselves alone;  
A rigorous world, with peremptory sway,  
Subjects us all, and even the noblest most.  
This world from thee, my honour and thy own,  
Demands one step; a step, by which convinc'd  
The kind may see thy heart disdains to wear  
A chain which his has greatly thrown aside.  
'Tis fitting too, thy sex's pride commands thee,  
To shew th' approving world thou canst resign,  
As well as he, nor with inferior spirit,  
A passion fatal to the public weal.  
But, above all, thou must root out for ever  
From the king's breast the least remain of hope,  
And henceforth make his mention'd love dishonour.

These things, my daughter, that must needs be done,  
Can but this way be done---by the safe refuge,  
'The sacred shelter of a husband's arms.  
And there is one ---

*Sig.* Good heavens ! what means my lord ?

*Siff.* One of illustrious family, high rank,  
Yet still of higher dignity and merit,  
Who can and will protect thee ; one to awe  
The king himself---Nay, hear me, *Sigismunda*---  
The noble *Osmond* courts thee for his bride,  
And has my plighted word---This day---

[*Sigismunda kneeling.*

My father !

Let me with trembling arms embrace thy knees !  
O if you ever wish'd to see me happy ;  
If e'er in infant years I gave you joy,  
When, as I prattling twin'd around your neck,  
You snatch'd me to your bosom, kiss'd my eyes,  
And melting said you saw my mother there ;  
O save me from that worst severity  
Of fate ! O outrage not my breaking heart  
To that degree !---I cannot !---'tis impossible !---  
So soon withdraw it, give it to another---  
Hear me, my dearest father ! hear the voice  
Of nature and humanity, that plead  
As well as justice for me !----Not to chuse  
Without your wise direction may be duty ;  
But still my choice is free---That is a right,  
Which even the lowest slave can never lose.  
And would you thus degrade me ? make me base ?  
For such it were, to give my worthless person  
Without my heart, an injury to *Osmond*,  
The highest can be done----Let me, my lord ---  
Or I shall die, shall by the sudden change  
Be to distraction shock'd ---Let me wear out  
My hapless days in solitude and silence,

Far from the malice of a prying world !  
 At least---you cannot sure refuse me this—  
 Give me a little time—I will do all,  
 All I can do, to please you !---O your eye  
 Sheds a kind beam—

*Siff.* My daughter ! you abuse  
 The softness of my nature—

*Sig.* Here, my father,  
 Till you relent, here will I grow for ever !

*Siff.* Rise, *Sigismunda*---Tho you touch my heart,  
 Nothing can shake th' inexorable dictates  
 Of honour, duty, and determin'd reason.  
 Then by the holy ties of filial love,  
 Resolve, I charge thee, to receive earl *Osmond*,  
 As suits the man who is thy father's choice,  
 And worthy of thy hand---I go to bring him---

*Sig.* Spare me, my dearest father !

[*Siffredi, aside.*

I must rush

From her soft grasp, or nature will betray me !

O grant us, heaven ! that fortitude of mind,  
 Which listens to our duty, not our passions—

Quit me, my child !

*Sig.* You cannot, Oh my father !  
 You cannot leave me thus !

*Siff.* Come hither, *Laura*.  
 Come to thy friend. Now shew thy self a friend.  
 Combate her weakness ; dissipate her tears ;  
 Cherish, and reconcile her to her duty.

## S C E N E III.

SIGISMUNDA, LAURA.

*Sig.* O woe on woe! distressed by love and duty!  
O every way unhappy *Sigismunda*!

*Lau.* Forgive me, madam, if I blame your grief.  
How can you waste your tears on one so false?  
Unworthy of your tenderness? to whom  
Nought but contempt is due and indignation?

*Sig.* You know not half the horrors of my fate!  
I might perhaps have learn'd to scorn his falsehood;  
Nay, when the first sad burst of tears was past,  
I might have rous'd my pride and scorn'd himself---  
But 'tis too much, this greatest last misfortune---  
O whither shall I fly? Where hide me, *Laura*,  
From the dire scene my father now prepares!

*Lau.* What thus alarms you, madam?

*Sig.* Can it be?

Can I---ah no!-----at once give to another  
My violated heart? in one wild moment?  
He brings earl *Osmond* to receive my vows!  
O dreadful change! for *Tancred* haughty *Osmond*!

*Lau.* Now, on my soul, 'tis what an outrag'd heart,  
Like yours should wish!--I should, by heavens, esteem it  
Most exquisite revenge!

*Sig.* Revenge on whom?

On my own heart, already but too wretched!

*Lau.* On him! this *Tancred*! who has basely sold,  
For the dull form of despicable grandeur,  
His faith, his love!--At once a slave and tyrant!

*Sig.* O rail at me, at my believing folly,  
My vain ill-founded hopes, but spare him, *Laura*!

*Lau.* Who rais'd these hopes? who triumphs o'er that  
weakness?

Pardon the word---You greatly merit him;  
Better than him, with all his giddy pomp!  
You rais'd him by your smiles when he was nothing!

Where



Where is your woman pride ? that guardian spirit  
Given us to dash the perfidy of man ?

Ye powers ! I cannot bear the thought with patience---  
Yet recent from the most unsparing vows  
The tongue of love e'er lavish'd ; from your hopes  
So vainly, idly, cruelly deluded ;  
Before the public thus, before your father,  
By an irrevocable solemn deed,  
With such inhuman scorn, to throw you from him !  
To give his faithless hand yet warm from thine,  
With complicated meanness, to *Constantia* !  
And to compleat his crime, when thy weak limbs  
Could scarce support thee, then, of thee regardless,  
To lead her off !

*Sig.* That was indeed a fight  
To poison love ! to turn it into rage  
And keen contempt ?---What means this stupid weak-  
ness

That hangs upon me ? Hence unworthy tears !  
Disgrace my cheek no more ! No more my heart,  
For one so coolly false or meanly fickle---  
O it imports not which---dare to suggests  
The least excuse !---Yes, traitor, I will wring  
Thy pride, will turn thy triumph to confusion !  
I will not pine away my days for thee,  
Sighing to brooks and groves ; while, with vain pity,  
You in a rival's arms lament my fate---  
No ! let me perish ! ere I tamely be  
That soft, that patient, gentle *Sigismunda*,  
Who can console her with the wretched boast,  
She was for thee unhappy !---If I am,  
I will be nobly so !---*Sicilia*'s daughters  
Shall wondering see in me a great example  
Of one who punish'd an ill-judging heart,  
Who made it bow to what it most abhorr'd !  
Crush'd it to misery ! for having thus  
So lightly listen'd to a worthless lover !

*Lan.*



*Lau.* At last it mounts ! the kindling pride of virtue ?  
Trust me, thy marriage will imbitter his---

*Sig.* O may the furies light his nuptial torch !  
Be it accurs'd as mine ! for the fair peace,  
'The tender joys of hymeneal love,  
May jealousy awak'd, and fell remorse,  
Pour all their fiercest venom thro his breast !  
Where the fates lead, and blind revenge, I follow !-----  
Let me not think---By injur'd love ! I vow,  
Thou shalt, base prince ! perfidious and inhuman !  
'Thou shalt behold me in another's arms !  
In his thou hatest ! *Osmond's* !

*Laur.* That will grind  
His heart with secret rage ! Aye, that will sting  
His soul to madness ! set him up a terror,  
A spectacle of woe to faithless lovers !  
Your cooler thought, besides, will of the change  
Approve, and think it happy. Noble *Osmond*  
From the same stock with him derives his birth,  
First of *Sicilian* barons, prudent, brave,  
Of strictest honour, and by all rever'd---

*Sig.* Talk not of *Osmond*, but perfidious *Tancred* !  
Rail at him, rail ! invent new names of scorn !  
Assist me, *Laura* ; lend my rage fresh fuel :  
Support my staggering purpose, which already  
Begins to fail me---Ah, my vaunts how vain !  
How have I ly'd to my own heart !--Alas !  
My tears return, the mighty flood o'erwhelms me !  
'Ten thousand crouding images distract  
My tortur'd thought--And is it come to this ?  
Our hopes ? our vows ? our oft repeated wishes,  
Breath'd from the fervent soul, and full of heaven,  
To make each other happy ?--come to this !

*Laur.* If thy own peace and honour cannot keep  
Thy resolution fix'd, yet, *Sigismunda*,  
O think, how deeply, how beyond retreat,  
Thy father is engag'd.

*Sig.*

Ah wretched weakness !

That thus enthrals my soul, that chafes thence  
 Each nobler thought, the sense of every duty !--  
 And have I then no tears for thee, my father ?  
 Can I forget thy cares, from helpless years,  
 Thy tenderness for me ? an eye still beam'd  
 With love ? a brow that never knew a frown ?  
 Nor a harsh word thy tongue ? Shall I for these  
 Repay thy stooping venerable age,  
 With shame, disquiet, anguish and dishonour ?  
 It must not be !--Thou first of angels ! come,  
 Sweet filial piety ! and firm my breast !  
 Yes, let one daughter to her fate submit,  
 Be nobly wretched--but her father happy !--  
*Laura* !--they come !--O heavens ! I cannot stand  
 The horrid trial !--Open, open, earth !  
 And hide me from their view !

*Laur.*

Madam !--

## SCENE IV.

SIFFREDE, OSMOND, SIGISMUNDA, LAURA.

*Siff.*

My daughter,

Behold my noble friend who courts thy hand,  
 And whom to call my son I shall be proud ;  
 Nor shall I less be pleas'd in his alliance,  
 To see thee happy.

*Ofm.*

Think not, I presume,

Madam, on this your father's kind consent,  
 To make me blest. I love you from a heart,  
 That seeks your good superior to my own ;  
 And will, by every art of tender friendship,  
 Consult your dearest welfare. May I hope,  
 Yours does not disavow your father's choice ?

*Sig.* I am a daughter, sir--and have no power  
 O'er my own heart--I die--Support me, *Laura*.

[Faints.]

*Siff.**Sig.*

*Siff.* Help--Bear her off--She breath's--my daughter!--

*Sig.*

Oh!

Forgive my weakness—soft—my *Laura*, lead me—  
To my apartment.

*Siff.*

Pardon me, my lord,

If by this sudden accident alarm'd

I leave you for a moment.

### S C E N E V.

*Osmond* alone.

Let me think—

What can this mean?—Is it to me aversion?

Or is it, as I fear'd, she loves another?

Ha!—Yes perhaps the king, the young count *Tancred*!

They were bred up together—Surely that,

That cannot be—Has he not given his hand,

In the most solemn manner, to *Constantia*?

Does not his crown depend upon the deed?

No—if they lov'd, and this old statesman knew it,

He could not to a king prefer a subject.

His virtues I esteem—nay more, I trust them—

So far as virtue goes—but could he place

His daughter on the throne of *Sicily*—

O 'tis a glorious bribe, too much for man!—

What is it then?—I care not what it be.

My honour now, my dignity demands,

That my propos'd alliance, by her father,

And even herself accepted, be not scorn'd.

I love her too---I never knew till now

To what a pitch I lov'd her. O she shot

Ten thousand charms into my inmost soul!

She look'd so mild, so amiably gentle,

She bow'd her head, she glow'd with such confusion,

Such loveliness of modesty! She is,

In gracious mind, in manners, and in person,

The perfect model of all female beauty!--

She must be mine--She is!--If yet her heart

Consents not to my happiness, her duty,

Join'd

Join'd to my tender cares, will gain so much  
Upon her generous nature——That will follow.

The man of sense, who acts a prudent part,  
Not flattering steals, but forms himself the heart.

*End of the Third Act.*

## ACT IV. SCENE I.

*The garden belonging to SIFFREDI's house.*

SIGISMUNDA, LAURA.

*Sigismunda, with a letter in her hand.*

**T**IS done —— I am a slave' —— The fatal vow  
Has pass'd my lips' —— Methought in those  
sad moments,

The tombs around, the faints, the darken'd altar,  
And all the trembling shrines with horror shook.

But here is still new matter of distress.

O *Tancred* cease to persecute me more !

O grudge me not some calmer state of woe !

Some quiet gloom to shade my hopeless days,

Where I may never hear of love and thee !

Has *Laura* too conspir'd against my peace ?

Why did you take this letter ? —— bear it back ——

*[Giving her the letter.]*

I will not court new pain.

*Laur.*

*Madam, Rodolpho*

Urg'd me so much, nay, even with tears conjur'd me,

But this once more to serve th' unhappy king —

For such he said he was —— that tho enrag'd,

Equal with thee, at his inhuman falsehood,

I could not to my brother's fervent prayers

Refuse this office —— Read it —— His excuses

Will only more expose his falsehood.

*Sig.*

No.

It suits not *Osmond's* wife to read one line

From



From that contagious hand——she knows too well!

*Laur.* He paints him out distress'd beyond expression,  
Even on the point of madness. Wild as winds,  
And fighting seas, he raves. His passions mix,  
With ceaseless rage, all in each giddy moment.  
He dies to see you and to clear his faith.

*Sig.* Save me from that!--That would be worse than all!

*Laur.* I but report my brother's words; who then  
Began to talk of some dark imposition,  
That had deceiv'd us all: when, interrupted,  
We heard your father and earl *Osmond* near,  
As summon'd to *Constantia's* court they went.

*Sig.* Ha! imposition?——Well!——If I am doom'd  
To be, o'er all my sex, the wretch of love,  
In vain I would resist——Give me the letter——  
To know the worst is some relief——Alas!  
It was not thus, with such dire palpitations,  
That, *Tancred*, once I us'd to read thy letters.

[*Attempting to read the letter, but gives it to Laura.*  
Ah fond remembrance blinds me!——Read it, *Laura*.

*Laura, reads.*

*Deliver me, Sigismunda, from that most exquisite misery which a faithful heart can suffer——To be thought base by her, from whose esteem even virtue borrows new charms. When I submitted to my cruel situation, it was not falsehood you beheld, but an excess of love. Rather than endanger that, I for a while gave up my honour. Every moment till I see you stabs me with severer pangs than real guilt itself can feel. Let me then conjure you to meet me in the garden, towards the close of the day, when I will explain this mystery. We have been most inhumanly abused; and that by the means of the very paper which I gave you, from the warmest sincerity of love, to assure to you the heart and hand of* *Tancred.*

*Sig.* There, *Laura*, there, the dreadful secret sprung!  
That paper! ah that paper! it suggests

A thousand



A thousand horrid thoughts—I to my father  
 Gave it; and he perhaps—I dare not cast  
 A look that way—If yet indeed you love me,  
 O blast me not, kind *Tancred*, with the truth!  
 O pitying keep me ignorant for ever!  
 What strange peculiar misery is mine?  
 Reduc'd to wish the man I love were false  
 Why was I hurry'd to a step so rash?  
 Repairless woe!—I might have waited, sure,  
 A few short hours—No duty that forbade—  
 I lov'd thy love that justice; till this day  
 Thy love an image of all perfect goodness!  
 A beam from heaven that glow'd with every virtue!  
 And have I thrown this prize of life away?  
 The piteous wreck of one distracted moment?  
 Ah the cold prudence of remorseless age!  
 Ah parents, traitors to your children's bliss!  
 Ah curs'd, ah blind revenge! On every hand  
 I was betray'd—You, *Laura*, too, betray'd me!—

*Laur.* Who, who, but he, whate'er he writes, betray'd  
 you?

Or false or pusillanimous. For once,  
 I will with you suppose, that his agreement  
 To the king's will was forg'd--Tho forg'd by whom?  
 Your father scorns the crime—Yet what avails it?  
 This, if it clears his truth, condemns his spirit.  
 A youthful king, by love and honour fir'd,  
 Patient to sit on his insulted throne,  
 And let an outrage, of so high a nature,  
 Unpunish'd pass, uncheck'd, uncontradict'd—  
 O 'tis a meanness equal even to falsehood!

*Sig.* *Laura*, no more—We have already judg'd  
 Too largely without knowledge. Oft, what seems  
 A trifle, a meer nothing, by itself,  
 In some nice situations, turns the scale  
 Of fate, and rules the most important actions.

Yes,

Yes, I begin to feel a sad presage :  
 I am undone, from that eternal source  
 Of human woes. The judgment of the passions.  
 But what have I to do with these excuses ?  
 O cease my treacherous heart to give them room !  
 It suits not thee to plead a lover's cause ;  
 Even to lament my fate is now dishonour.  
 Nought now remains, but with relentless purpose,  
 To shun all interviews, all clearing up  
 Of this dark scene ; to wrap myself in gloom,  
 In solitude and shades ; there to devour  
 The silent sorrows ever swelling here ;  
 And since I must be wretched——for I must——  
 To claim the mighty misery myself,  
 Engross it all, and spare a hapless father.  
 Hence, let me fly !——the hour approaches —  
*Laur.* Madam,  
 Behold he comes—the king—  
*Sig.* Heavens ! how escape ?  
 No---I will stay---This one last meeting---Leave me.

## S C E N E II.

TANCRED, SIGISMUNDA.

*Tanc.* And are these long long hours of torture past ?  
 My life ! my *Sigismunda* !

[*Throwing himself at her feet.*

*Sig.*

Rise, my lord.

To see my sovereign thus no more becomes me.

*Tanc.* O let me kiss the ground on which you tread !  
 Let me exhale my soul in softest transport !  
 Since I again embrace my *Sigismunda* !

[*Rising.*

Unkind ! how couldst thou ever deem me false ?  
 How thus dishonour love——O I could much  
 Embitter

Embitter my complaint !---How low were then  
Thy thoughts of me ? How didst thou then affront  
The human heart itself ? After the vows,  
The fervent truth, the tender protestations,  
Which mine has often pour'd, to let thy breast,  
Whate'er th' appearance was, admit suspicion ?

*Sig.* How ! when I heard myself your full consent  
To the late king's so just and prudent will ?  
Heard it before you read, in solemn senate ?  
When I beheld you give your royal hand,  
To her, whose birth and dignity, of right,  
Demands that high alliance ? Yes, my lord,  
You have done well. The man, whom heaven appoints  
To govern others, should himself first learn  
To bend his passions to the sway of reason.  
In all you have done well ; but when you bid  
My humbled hopes look up to you again,  
And sooth'd with wanton cruelty my weakness---  
That too was well---My vanity deserv'd  
The sharp rebuke, whose fond extravagance  
Could ever dream to balance your repose,  
Your glory and the welfare of a people.

*Tan.* Chide on, chide on. Thy soft reproaches now  
Instead of wounding, only soothe my fondness.  
No, no, thou charming consort of my soul !  
I never lov'd thee with such faithful ardor,  
As in that cruel miserable moment  
You thought me false ; when even my honour stoop'd  
To wear for thee a baffled face of baseness.  
It was thy barbarous father, *Sigismunda*,  
Who caught me in the toil. He turn'd that paper,  
Meant for th' assuring bond of nuptial love,  
To ruin it for ever ; he, he wrote  
That forg'd consent, you heard, beneath my name,  
Nay dar'd before my outrag'd throne to read it !  
Had he not been thy father---Ha ! my love !

You

You tremble, you grow pale.

*Sig.* Oh leave me, *Tancred*!

*Tan.* No!--leave thee?--Never! never! till you set  
My heart at peace, till these dear lips again  
Pronounce thee mine! Without thee I renounce  
My self, my friends, the world---Here on this hand---

*Sig.* My lord, forget that hand, which never now  
Can be to thine united---

*Tan.*

*Sigismunda*!

What dost thou mean? Thy words, thy looks, thy manner,  
Seem to conceal some horrid secret---heavens!

No---That was wild---Distraction fires the thought!

*Sig.* Enquire no more---I never can be thine.

*Tan.* What, who shall interpose? who dares attempt  
To brave the fury of an injur'd king?  
Who, ere he sees thee ravish'd from his hopes,  
Will wrap all blazing *Sicily* in flames---

*Sig.* In vain your power, my lord---This fatal error,  
Join'd to my father's unrelenting will,  
Has plac'd an everlasting bar betwixt us---  
I am---earl *Osmond's*---Wife.

*Tan.*

Earl *Osmond's* wife!--

[*After a long pause, during which they  
look at one another with the highest  
agitation and most tender distress.*]

Heavens! did I hear thee right? what! marry'd?  
marry'd!

Lost to thy faithful *Tancred*! lost for ever!  
Couldst thou then doom me to such matchless woe,  
Without so much as hearing me?---Distraction!

Alas! what hast thou done? Ah *Sigismunda*!--

Thy rash credulity has done a deed,  
Which of two happiest lovers---that e'er felt  
The blissful power, has made two finish'd wretches!  
But---Madness!--Sure, thou know'st it cannot be!  
This hand is mine! a thousand thousand vows---

S C E N E



## SCENE III.

TANCRED, OSMOND, SIGISMUNDA.

OSMOND.

*[Snatching her hand from the king.]*

Madam, this hand, by the most solemn rites,  
 A little hour ago, was given to me ;  
 And did not sovereign honour now command me,  
 Never but with my life to quit my claim,  
 I would renounce it---thus !

*Tan.* Ha ! who art thou ?  
 Presumptuous man !

*[Sigismunda, aside.]*

Where is my father ? heavens !

*[Goes out.]*

*Osmon.* One thou shouldst better know--Yes---view me  
 ---one !

Who can and will maintain his rights and honour,  
 Against a faithless prince, an upstart king,  
 Whose first base deed is what a harden'd tyrant  
 Would blush to act.

*Tan.* Insolent *Osmond* ! know,  
 This upstart king will hurl confusion on thee,  
 And all who shall invade his sacred rights,  
 Prior to thine---Thine founded on compulsion,  
 On infamous deceit, while his proceed  
 From mutual love and free long-plighted faith.  
 She is, and shall be mine !---I will annul,  
 By the high power with which the laws invest me,  
 Those guilty forms in which you have entrap'd  
 Basely entrap'd, to thy detested nuptials,  
 My queen betroth'd ; who has my heart, my hand,  
 And shall partake my throne,---If, haughty lord,  
 If this thou didst not know, then know it now !

And



310 T A N C R E D *and*

And know besides, as I have told thee this,  
Shouldst thou but think to urge thy treason further---  
Than treason more ! Treason against my love ?---  
Thy life shall answer for it !

*Osmond.* Ha ! my life !

It moves my scorn to hear thy empty threats.  
When was it that an *Norman* baron's life  
Became so vile, as on the frown of kings  
To hang ?---Of that my lord the law must judge :  
Or if the law be weak, my guardian sword---

*Tan.* Dare not to touch it, traitor ! lest my rage  
Break loose, and do a deed that misbecomes me.

S C E N E IV.

TANCRED, SIFFREDI, OSMOND.

*Siffredi entering.*

My gracious lord ! what is it I behold ?  
My sovereign in contention with his subjects ?  
Surely this house deserves from royal *Tancred*  
A little more regard, than to be made  
A scene of trouble and unseemly jars.  
It grieves my soul, it baffles every hope,  
It makes me sick of life, to see thy glory  
Thus blasted in the bud--Heavens ! can your highness  
From your exalted character descend,  
The dignity of virtue ; and, instead  
Of being the protector of our rights,  
The holy guardian of domestic blifs,  
Unkindly thus disturb the sweet repose,  
The sacred peace of families, for which  
Alone the freeborn race of man to laws  
And government submitted ?

*Tan.* My lord *Siffredi*,  
Spare thy rebuke. The duties of my station  
Are not to me unknown---But thou, old man,

Dost

Dost thou not blush to talk of rights invaded?  
 And of our best our dearest bliss disturb'd?  
 Thou! who with more than barbarous perfidy  
 Hast trampled all allegiance, justice, truth,  
 Humanity itself, beneath thy feet?  
 Thou know'st thou hast---I could, to thy confusion,  
 Return thy hard reproaches; but I spare thee  
 Before this lord, for whose ill-sorted friendship  
 Thou hast most basely sacrific'd thy daughter.  
 Farewel, my lord!--For thee, lord conitable,  
 Who dost presume to lift thy surly eye  
 To my soft love, my gentle *Sigismunda*,  
 I once again command thee, on thy life---  
 Yes---chew thy rage---but mark me---on thy life,  
 No further urge thy arrogant pretensions!

## S C E N E V.

SIFREDI, OSMOND.

*Osm.* Ha! arrogant pretensions! heaven and earth!  
 What! arrogant pretensions to my wife?  
 My wedded wife! Where are we? In a land  
 Of civil rule, of liberty and laws! ---  
 Not on my life pursue them? --- Giddy prince!  
 My life disdains thy nod. It is the gift  
 Of parent heaven, who gave me too an arm,  
 A spirit to defend it against tyrants.  
 The *Norman* race, the sons of mighty *Rollo*,  
 Who rushing in a tempest from the north,  
 Great nurse of generous freemen! bravely won  
 With their own swords their seats, and still possess them  
 By the same noble tenure, are not us'd  
 To hear such language---If I now desist,  
 Then brand me for a coward! deem me villain!  
 A traitor to the public! By this conduct

Deceiv'd,

Deceiv'd, betray'd, insulted, tyranniz'd.  
 Mine is a common cause. My arm shall guard,  
 Mix'd with my own, the rights of each *Sicilian*,  
 Of social life, and of mankind in general.  
 Ere to thy tyrant rage they fall a pray,  
 I shall find means to shake thy tottering throne,  
 Which this illegal, this perfidious usage  
 Forfeits at once, and crush thee in the ruins !---  
*Constantia* is my queen !

*Siff.*

Lord constable,

Let us be stedfast in the right ; but let us  
 Act with cool prudence, and with manly temper,  
 As well as manly firmness. True, I own,  
 Th' indignities you suffer are so high,  
 As might even justify what now you threaten.  
 But if, my lord, we can prevent the woes,  
 The cruel horrors of intestine war,  
 Yet hold untouch'd our liberties and laws ;  
 O let us, rais'd above the turbid sphere  
 Of little selfish passions, nobly do it !  
 Nor to our hot intemperate pride pour out  
 A dire libation of *Sicilian* blood.  
 'Tis godlike magnanimity, to keep,  
 When most provok'd, our reason calm and clear,  
 And execute her will from a strong sense  
 Of what is right, without the vulgar aid  
 Of heat and passion, which, tho honest, bear us  
 Often too far. Remember that my house  
 Protects my daughter still ; and ere I saw her  
 Thus ravish'd from us, by the arm of power,  
 This hand should act the *Roman* father's part.  
 Fear not ; be temperate ; all will yet be well.  
 I know the king. At first his passions burst  
 Quick as the lightning's flash : but in his breast  
 Honour and justice dwell---Trust me, to reason  
 He will return.

*Ojm.*

*Ofm.* He will !——By heavens, he shall :——  
 You know the king——I wish, my lord *Siffredi*,  
 That you had deign'd to tell me all you knew——  
 And would you have me wait, with duteous patience,  
 Till he return to reason ? Ye just powers !  
 When he has planted on our necks his foot,  
 And trod us into slaves ; when his vain pride  
 Is cloy'd with our submission ; if, at last,  
 He finds his arm too weak to shake the frame  
 Of wide-establiſh'd order out of joint,  
 And overturn all justice ; then, perchance,  
 He, in a fit of sickly kind repentance,  
 May make a merit to return to reason.  
 No, no, my lord !——There is a nobler way,  
 To teach the blind oppressive *Fury* reason :  
 Oft has the lustre of avenging steel  
 Unseal'd her stupid eyes——The sword is reason !

S C E N E VI.

SIFFREDI, OSMOND, RODOLPHO.

[*With guards.*

*Rod.* My lord high constable of *Sicily*,  
 In the king's name, and by his special order,  
 I here arrest you prisoner of state.

*Ofm.* What king ? I know no king of *Sicily*——  
 Unless he be the husband of *Constantia*.

*Rod.* Then know him now---Behold his royal orders  
 To bear you to the castle of *Palermo*.

*Siff.* Let the big torrent foam its madness off.  
 Submit, my lord—No castle long can hold  
 Our wrongs---This, more than friendship or alliance,  
 Confirms me thine ; this binds me to thy fortunes,  
 By the strong tie of common injury,  
 Which nothing can dissolve—I grieve, *Rodolpho*,

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O

To



To see the reign in such unhappy fort,  
Begin.

*Ofm.* The reign! the usurpation call it!  
This meteor king may blaze a while, but soon  
Must spend his idle terrors—Sir, lead on—  
Farewel, my lord---More than my life and fortune,  
Remember well, is in your hands—my honour!

*Siff.* Our honour is the same. My son, farewel----  
We shall not long be parted. On these eyes  
Sleep shall not shed his balm, till I behold thee  
Restor'd to freedom, or partake thy bonds.

Even noble courage is not void of blame,  
Till nobler patience sanctifies its flame.

*End of the fourth Act.*

## ACT V. SCENE I.

*SIFFREDI, alone.*

**T**HE prospect lows around. I found the king,  
Tho calm'd a little, with subsiding tempest,  
As suits his generous nature, yet in love  
Abated nought, most ardent in his purpose;  
Inexorably fix'd, whate'er the risque,  
'To claim my daughter, and dissolve this marriage-----  
I have embark'd, upon a perilous sea,  
A mighty treasure. Here the rapid youth,  
'Th' impetuous passions of a lover-king  
Check my bold course; and there, the jealous pride  
'Th' impatient honour of a haughty lord  
Of the first rank, in interest and dependants  
Near equal to the king, forbid retreat.  
My honour too, the same unchang'd conviction,

That



That these my measures were, and still remain  
 Of absolute necessity, to save  
 The land from civil fury, urge me on.  
 But how proceed?—I only faster rush  
 Upon the desperate evils I would shun.  
 Whate'er the motive be, deceit, I fear,  
 And harsh unnatural force are not the means  
 Of public welfare or of private bliss—  
 Bear witness, Heaven! Thou mind-inspecting eye!  
 My breast is pure. I have prefer'd my duty,  
 The good and safety of my fellow-subjects,  
 To all those views that fire the selfish race  
 Of men, and mix them in eternal broils.

*Enter an officer belonging to Siffredi.*

*Off.* My lord, a man of noble port, his face  
 Wrap'd in disguise, is earnest for admission.

*Siff.* Go, bid him enter— [*Officer goes out.*]

Ha! wrap'd in disguise!

And at this late unseasonable hour!  
 When o'er the world tremendous midnight reigns,  
 By the dire gloom of raging tempest doubled—

## SCENE II.

*SIFFREDI, OSMOND discovering himself.*

*Siff.* What! ha! earl *Osmond*, you?—welcome, once more,  
 'To this glad roof!—But why in this disguise?  
 Would I could hope the king exceeds his promise!  
 I have his faith soon as to-morrow's sun  
 Shall gild *Sicilia's* cliffs, you shall be free.—  
 Has some good angel turn'd his heart to justice?

*Osmond.* It is not by the favour of count *Tancred*  
 That I am here. As much I scorn his favour,  
 As I defy his tyranny and threats—  
 Our friend *Goffredo*, who commands the castle,  
 On my parole, ere dawn, to render back

My person, has permitted me this freedom.  
 Know then ; the faithless outrage of to-day,  
 By him committed whom you call the king,  
 Has rous'd *Constantia's* court. Our friends, the friends  
 Of virtue, justice, and of public faith,  
 Ripe for revolt, are in high ferment all.  
 This, this, they say, exceeds whate'er deform'd  
 The miserable days we saw beneath  
*William the bad*. This saps the solid base,  
 At once, of government and private life ;  
 This shameless imposition on the faith,  
 The majesty of senates, this lewd insult,  
 'This violation of the rights of men.  
 Added to these, his ignominious treatment  
 Of her th' illustrious offspring of our kings,  
*Sicilia's* hope, and now our royal mistress.  
 You know, my lord, how grossly these infringe  
 The late king's will ; which orders, if count *Tancred*  
 Make not *Constantia* partner of his throne,  
 That he be quite excluded the succession,  
 And she to *Henry* given, king of the *Romans*,  
 The potent emperor *Barbarossa's* son,  
 Who seeks with earnest instance her alliance.  
 I thence of you, as guardian of the laws,  
 As guardian of this will to you entrusted,  
 Desire, nay more, demand, your instant aid,  
 To see it put in vigorous execution.

*Siff.* You cannot doubt, my lord, of my concurrence.  
 Who more than I have labour'd this great point ?  
 'Tis my own plan. And, if I drop it now,  
 I should be justly branded with the shame  
 Of rash advice, or despicable weakness.  
 But let us not precipitate the matter.  
*Constantia's* friends are numerous and strong ;  
 Yet *Tancred's*, trust me, are of equal force.  
 E'er since the secret of his birth was known,

The

The people all are in a tumult hurl'd  
 Of boundless joy, to hear there lives a prince  
 Of mighty *Guiscard's* line. Numbers, besides,  
 Of powerful barons, who at heart had pin'd,  
 To see the reign of their renown'd forefathers,  
 Won by immortal deeds of matchless valour,  
 Pass from the gallant *Normans* to the *Suevi*,  
 Will with a kind of rage, espouse his cause——  
 'Tis so my lord——be not by passion blinded——  
 'Tis surely so——O if our prating virtue  
 Dwells not in words alone——O let us join,  
 My generous *Osmond*, to avert these woes,  
 And yet sustain our tottering *Norman* kingdom!

*Os.* But how, *Siffredi*? how?---- If by soft means  
 We can maintain our rights, and save our country,  
 May his unnatural blood first stain the sword,  
 Who with unpitting fury first shall draw it!

*Siff.* I have a thought---The glorious work be thine.  
 But it requires an awful flight of virtue,  
 Above the passions of the vulgar breast,  
 And thence from thee I hope it noble *Osmond*——  
 Suppose my daughter, to her God devoted,  
 Were plac'd within some convent's sacred verge,  
 Beneath the dread protection of the altar——

*Os.* Ere then, by heavens! I would devoutly shave  
 My holy scalp, turn whining monk myself,  
 And pray incessant for the tyrant's safety!——  
 What! How! because an insolent invader,  
 A sacrilegious tyrant, in contempt  
 Of all those noblest rights, which to maintain  
 Is man's peculiar pride, demands my wife;  
 That I shall thus betray a common cause  
 Of human kind, and tamely yield her up,  
 Even in the manner you propose——O then  
 I were supremely vile! degraded! sham'd!  
 The scorn of manhood! and abhor'd of honour!

*Siff.* There is, my lord, an honour, the calm child  
Of reason, of humanity and mercy,  
Superior far to this punctilious demon,  
That singly minds itself, and oft embroils,  
With proud barbarian niceties the world! [dence—

*Osm.* My lord, my lord!—I cannot brook your pri-  
It holds a pulse unequal to my blood—  
Unblemish'd honour is the flower of virtue!  
The vivifying soul! and he who slights it  
Will leave the other dull and lifeless dross.

*Siff.* No more—You are too warm.

*Osm.* You are too cool.

*Siff.* Too cool, my lord? I were indeed too cool,  
Not to resent this language, and to tell thee——  
I wish earl *Osmond* were as cool as I  
To his own selfish bliss—ay, and as warm  
To that of others—But of this no more—  
My daughter is thy wife—I gave her to thee,  
And will against all force maintain her thine.  
But think not I will catch thy headlong passions,  
Whirl'd in a blaze of madness o'er the land;  
Or, till the last extremity compel me,  
Risque the dire means of war-----The king to-morrow  
Will set you free; and, if by gentle means  
He does not yield my daughter to your arms,  
And wed *Constantia*, as the will requires,  
Why then expect me on the side of justice—  
Let that suffice.

*Osm.* It does—Forgive my heat.  
My rankled mind, by injuries inflam'd,  
May be too prompt to take and give offence.

*Siff.* 'Tis pass'd—your wrongs, I own, may well transport  
The wisest mind——But henceforth, noble *Osmond*,  
Do me more justice, honour more my truth,  
Nor mark me with an eye of squint suspicion—  
These jars apart—You may repose your soul

On



On my firm faith and unremitting friendship.  
Of that I sure have given exalted proof,  
And the next sun we see, shall prove it further—  
Return my son, and from your friend *Goffredo*  
Release your word. There try, by soft repose,  
To calm your breast.

*Os.* Bid the vext ocean sleep,  
Swept by the pinions of the raging north—  
But your frail age, by care and toil exhausted,  
Demands the balm of all-repairing rest.

*Siff.* Soon as to-morrow's dawn shall streak the skies,  
I, with my friends in solemn state assembled,  
Will to the palace, and demand your freedom.  
Then by calm reason, or by higher means,  
The king shall quit his claim, and in the face  
Of *Sicily*, my daughter shall be yours.  
Farewel.

*Os.* My lord, good night.

## S C E N E III.

OSMOND alone. [*After a long pause.*

I like him not----

Yes---I have mighty matter of suspicion.  
'Tis plain---I see it lurking in his breast,  
He has a foolish fondness for this king---  
My honour is not safe, while here my wife  
Remains---Who knows but he this very night  
May bear her to some convent as he mention'd---  
The king too---tho I smother'd up my rage,  
I mark'd it well---will set me free to-morrow.  
Why not to-night? He has some dark design---  
By heavens! he has---I am abus'd most grossly;  
Made the vile tool of this old statesman's schemes;  
Marry'd to one---Ay, and he knew it---one  
Who loves young *Tancred*! Hence her swooning, tears,



And all her soft distress, when she disgrac'd me  
 By basely giving her perfidious hand  
 Without her heart---Hell and perdition ! this,  
 This is the perfidy !---This is the fell,  
 'The keen, envenom'd, exquisite disgrace !  
 Which to a man of honour even exceeds  
 The falshood of the person---But I now  
 Will rouse me from the poor tame lethargy,  
 By my believing fondness cast upon me.  
 I will not wait his crawling timid motions,  
 Perhaps to blind me meant, which he to-morrow  
 Has promis'd to pursue. No ! ere his eyes  
 Shall open on to-morrow's orient beam,  
 I will convince him that earl *Osmond* never  
 Was form'd to be his dupe---I know full well  
 'Th' important weight and danger of the deed :  
 But to a man, whom greater dangers press,  
 Driven to the brink of infamy and horror,  
 Rashness itself, and utter desperation,  
 Are the best prudence---I will bear her off  
 'This night, and lodge her in a place of safety.  
 I have a trusty band that waits not far.  
 Hence ! let me lose no time---One rapid moment  
 Should ardent form, at once, and execute  
 A bold design---'Tis fix'd---'Tis done !---Yes, then,  
 When I have seiz'd the prize of love and honour,  
 And with a friend secur'd her ; to the castle  
 I will repair, and claim *Goffredo's* promise  
 To rise with all his garrison---my friends  
 With brave impatience wait. The mine is laid,  
 And only wants my kindling touch to spring.

S C E N E

SCENE IV.

SIGISMUNDA's Apartment.

SIGISMUNDA, LAURA.

*Lau.* Heavens ! 'tis a fearful night !

*Sig.* Ah ! the black rage

Of midnight tempest, or th' assuring smiles

Of radiant morn are equal all to me.

Nought now has charms or terrors to my breast,

The seat of stupid woe !---Leave me, my *Laura*.

Kind rest, perhaps, may hush my woes a little---

Oh for that quiet sleep that knows no morning !

*Lau.* Madam, indeed I know not how to go.

Indulge my fondness---let me watch a while

By your sad bed, till these dread hours shall pass.

*Sig.* Alas ! what is the toil of elements,

This idle perturbation of the sky,

To what I feel within !---Oh that the fires

Of pitying heaven would point their fury here !

Good night, my dearest *Laura* !

*Lau.* Oh I know not

What this oppression means - but 'tis with pain,

With tears, I can persuade myself to leave you---

Well then---Good night, my dearest *Sigismunda* !

SCENE V.

*Sig.* And am I then alone ?---The most undone,

Most wretched being now beneath the cope

Of this affrighting gloom that wraps the world !---

I said I did not fear---Ah me ! I feel

A shivering horror run thro all my powers !

O I am nought but tumult, fears and weakness !

And yet how idle fear when hope is gone,

O 5

Gone,

Gone, gone for ever!---O thou gentle scene

[*Looking towards her bed.*]

Of sweet repose, where by th' oblivious draught  
Of each sad toilsome day, to peace restor'd  
Unhappy mortals lose their woes awhile,  
Thou hast no peace for me!---What shall I do?  
How pass this dreadful night, so big with terror?---  
Here, with the midnight shades, here will I sit.

[*Sitting down.*]

A prey to dire despair, and ceaseless weep  
The hours away---Bless me!---I heard a noise-----

[*Starting up.*]

No---I mistook---Nothing but silence reigns  
And awful midnight round---Again!---O heavens!  
My lord the king!

## SCENE VI.

TANCRED, SIGISMUNDA.

*Tan.* Be not alarm'd, my love.

*Sig.* My royal lord! why at this midnight-hour,  
How came you hither?

*Tan.* By that secret way  
My love contriv'd, when we, in happier days,  
Us'd to devote these hours, so much in vain,  
To vows of love and everlasting friendship.

*Sig.* Why will you thus persist to add new stings  
To her distress, who never can be thine?  
O fly me! fly! You know-----

*Tan.* I know too much.  
O how I could reproach thee, *Sigismunda*!  
Pour out my injur'd soul in just complaints!  
But now the time permits not, these swift moments-----  
I told thee how thy father's artifice  
Forc'd me to seem perfidious in thy eyes.  
Ah, fatal blindness! not to have observ'd

The

The mingled pangs of rage and love that shook me ;  
 When, by my cruel public situation  
 Compell'd, I only feign'd consent, to gain  
 A little time, and more secure thee mine.  
 E'er since---A dreadful interval of care !---  
 My thoughts have been employ'd, not without hope,  
 How to defeat *Siffredi's* barbarous purpose.  
 But thy credulity has ruin'd all,  
 Thy rash, thy wild---I know not what to name it---  
 Oh it has prov'd the giddy hopes of man  
 To be delusion all, and sickening folly !

*Sig.* Ah, generous *Tancred* ! ah thy truth destroys me !  
 Yes, yes, 'tis I, 'tis I alone am false !  
 My hasty rage, join'd to my tame submission,  
 More than the most exalted filial duty  
 Could e'er demand, has dash'd our cup of fate  
 With bitterness unequal'd---But, alas !  
 What are thy woes to mine ?---to mine ! just heaven !---  
 Now is thy turn of vengeance---hate, renounce me !  
 O leave me to the fate I well deserve,  
 To sink in hopeless misery !---at least,  
 Try to forget the worthless *Sigismunda* !

*Tan.* Forget thee ! No ! Thou art my soul itself !  
 I have no thought, no hope, no wish but thee !  
 Even this repented injury, the fears,  
 That rouse me all to madness, at the thought  
 Of losing thee, the whole collected pains  
 Of my full heart, serve but to make thee dearer !  
 Ah, how forget thee !---Much must be forgot,  
 Ere *Tancred* can forget his *Sigismunda* !

*Sig.* But you, my lord, must make that great effort.

*Tan.* Can *Sigismunda* make it ?

*Sig.* Ah ! I know not  
 With that success---But all that feeble woman  
 And love-entangled reason can perform,  
 I, to the utmost, will exert to do it.

*Tan.*



*Tan.* Fear not---'Tis done!---If thou canst form the thought,  
Success is sure---I am forgot already!

*Sig.* Ah *Tancred*!---But, my lord, respect me more.  
Think who I am---What can you now propose?

*Tan.* To claim the plighted vows which heaven has heard,

To vindicate the rights of holy love  
By faith and honour bound, to which compar'd  
These empty forms, which have ensnar'd thy hand,  
Are impious guile, abuse, and profanation---  
Nay, as a king, whose high prerogative  
By this unlicens'd marriage is affronted,  
To bid the laws themselves pronounce it void.

*Sig.* Honour, my lord, is much too proud to catch  
At every slender twig of nice distinctions.  
These for th' unfeeling vulgar may do well :  
But those, whose souls are by the nicer rule  
Of virtuous delicacy nobly sway'd,  
Stand at another bar than that of laws.  
Then cease to urge me---Since I am not born  
To that exalted fate to be your queen---  
Or, yet a dearer name---to be your wife!---  
I am the wife of an illustrious lord  
Of your own princely blood ; and what I am,  
I will with proper dignity remain.  
Retire, my royal lord---There is no means  
To cure the wounds this fatal day has given.  
We meet no more!

*Tan.* Oh barbarous *Sigismunda* !  
And canst thou talk thus steadily? thus treat me  
With such unpitying, unrelenting rigour?  
Poor is the love, that rather than give up  
A little pride, a little formal pride,  
The breath of vanity! can bear to see  
The man, whose heart was once so dear to thine



By many a tender vow so mix'd together,  
 A prey to anguish, fury and distraction!---  
 Thou canst not surely make me such a wretch,  
 Thou canst not, *Sigismunda*!---Yet relent,  
 O save us yet!---*Rodolpho*, with my guards,  
 Waits in the garden--Let us seize the moments  
 We ne'er may have again---With more than power  
 I will assert thee mine, with fairest honour.  
 The world shall even approve; each honest bosom  
 Swell with a kindred joy to see us happy.

*Sig.* The world approve!—What is the world to me?  
 The conscious mind is its own awful world.—  
 And yet, perhaps, if thou wert not a king,  
 I know not, *Tancred*, what I might have done.  
 Then, then, my conduct, sanctify'd by love,  
 Could not be deem'd, by the severest judge,  
 The mean effect of interest, or ambition.  
 But now not all my partial heart can plead,  
 Shall ever shake th' unalterable dictates  
 That tyrannize my breast.

*Tan.* 'Tis well---No more---  
 I yield me to my fate--Yes, yes inhuman!  
 Since thy barbarian heart is steel'd by pride,  
 Shut up to love and pity, here behold me  
 Cast on the ground, a vile and abject wretch!  
 Lost to all cares, all dignities, all duties!  
 Here will I grow, breathe out my faithful soul,  
 Here, at thy feet---Death, death alone shall part us!

*Sig.* Have you then vow'd to drive me to perdition?  
 What can I more?---Yes, *Tancred*! once again  
 I will forget the dignity my station  
 Commands me to sustain---for the last time  
 Will tell thee, that, I fear, no ties, no duty,  
 Can ever root thee from my hapless bosom.  
 O leave me! fly me! were it but in pity!—  
 To see what once we tenderly have lov'd,  
 Cut off from every hope---cut off for ever!

Is pain thy generosity should spare me.  
 Then rise, my lord ; and if you truly love me ;  
 If you respect my honour, nay, my peace,  
 Retire for tho' th' emotions of my heart  
 Can ne'er alarm my virtue ; yet, alas !  
 They tear it so, they pierce it with such anguish---  
 Oh 'tis too much !---I cannot bear the conflict !

## S C E N E VII.

TANCRED, OSMOND, SIGISMUNDA.

OSMOND, *entering*.

Turn, tyrant ! turn ! and answer to my honour,  
 For this thy base insufferable outrage !

*Tan.* Insolent traitor ! think not to escape

Thyself my vengeance ! *[They fight, Osmond falls.*

*Sig.* Help here ! Help !---O heavens !

*[Throwing herself down by him.*

Alas ! my lord, what meant your headlong rage ?

That faith, which I, this day, upon the altar

To you devoted, is unblemish'd, pure,

As vestal truth ; was resolutely yours,

Beyond the power of aught on earth to shake it.

*Os.* Perfidious woman ! die !-----

*[Shortening his sword, he plunges it into her breast.*  
 and to the grave

Attend a husband, yet but half aveng'd !

*Tan.* O horror ! horror ! execrable villain !

*Os.* And, tyrant ! thou !---Thou shalt not o'er my  
 tomb

Exult ---'Tis well---'Tis great---I die content.--- *[Dies.*

S C E N E

## SCENE VIII.

TANCRED, SIFFREDI, RODOLPHO, SIGISMUNDA,  
LAURA.

TANCRED. (*throwing himself down by Sigismunda.*  
Quick, ! here ! bring aid !---All in *Palermo* bring  
Whose skill can save her !---Ah ! that gentle bosom  
Pours fast the streams of life.

*Sig.* All aid is vain,  
I feel the powerful hand of death upon me——  
But, oh ! it sheds a sweetness thro my fate,  
That I am thine again ; and without blame,  
May in my *Tancred's* arms resign my soul !

*Tan.* Oh, death is in that voice ! so gently mild,  
So sadly sweet, as mixes even with mine  
The tears of hovering angels !---Mine again !---  
And is it thus the cruel fates have join'd us ?  
Are these the horrid nuptials they prepare  
For love like ours ? Is virtue thus rewarded ?  
Let not my impious rage accuse just heaven !  
Thou, *Tancred* ! Thou ! hast murder'd *Sigismunda* !  
That furious man was but the tool of fate,  
I, I the cause !---But I will do thee justice  
On this deaf heart ! that to thy tender wisdom  
Refus'd an ear---Yes, death shall soon unite us !

*Sig.* Live, live, my *Tancred* !---Let my death suffice  
To expiate all that may have been amiss.  
May it appease the fates, avert their fury  
From thy propitious reign ! Mean time, of me  
And of thy glory mindful, live, I charge thee,  
To guard our friends, and make thy people happy---

[*Observing Siffredi fixt in astonishment and grief.*  
My father !———Oh ! how shall I lift my eyes  
To thee my sinking father !

*Siff.*

Awful heaven !

I am

I am chafis'd'—My dearest child!—

*Sig.*

Where am I?

A fearful darkness closes all around—

My friends! We needs must part---I must obey

Th' imperious call---Farewel, my *Laura!* cherish

My poor afflicted father's age---*Rodolpho,*

Now is the time to watch th' unhappy king,

With all the care and tenderness of friendship—

Oh my dear father! bow'd beneath the weight

Of age and grief---the victim even of virtue,

Receive my last adieu!---Where art thou, *Tancred?*

Give me thy hand---But ah!---it cannot save me

From the dire king of terrors, whose cold power

Creeps o'er my heart—Oh!

*Tan.*

How these pangs distract me;

O lift thy gracious eyes!—Thou leav'st me then!

Thou leav'st me, *Sigismunda!*

*Sig.*

Yet a moment---

I had, my *Tancred*, something more to say—

Yes—but thy love and tenderness for me

Sure makes it needless---Harbour no resentment

Against my father; venerate his zeal,

That acted from a principle of goodness,

From faithful love to thee---Live, and maintain

My innocence imbalm'd, with holiest care

Preserve my spotless memory!—I die—

ETERNAL MERCY take my trembling soul!

Oh! tis the only sting of death to part

From those we love---from thee---farewel, my *Tan-*

*cred!*

(*Dies.*)

*Tan.* Thus then!

*Flying to his sword is held by Rodolpho.*

*Rod.* Hold! hold! my lord! --Have you forgot

Your *Sigismunda's* last request already?

*Tan.* Of! set me free! Think not to bind me down,

With barbarous friendship, to the rack of life!

What hand can shut the thousand thousand gates,

Which



Which death still opens to the woes of mortals?—  
 I shall find means---No power in earth or heaven  
 Can force me to endure the hateful light,  
 Thus robb'd of all that lent it joy and sweetness!  
 Off! traitors! off! or my distracted soul  
 Will burst indignant from this jail of nature,  
 To where she beckons yonder---No, mild seraph!  
 Point not to life---I cannot linger here,  
 Cut off from thee, the miserable pity,  
 The scorn of human-kind!---A trampled king!  
 Who let his mean poor-hearted love, one moment,  
 To coward prudence stoop; who made it not  
 The first undoubting action of his reign,  
 To snatch thee to his throne, and there to shield thee.  
 Thy helpless bosom from a ruffian's fury!---  
 O shame! O agony! O the fell stings  
 Of late, of vain repentance!---Ha! my brain  
 Is all on fire! a wild abyss of thought!---  
 Th' infernal world discloses! See! behold him!  
 Lo! with fierce smiles he shakes the bloody steel,  
 And mocks my feeble tears!---Hence! quickly, hence  
 Spurn his vile carcass! give it to the dogs!  
 Expose it to the winds and screaming ravens!  
 Or hurl it down that fiery steep to hell,  
 There with his soul to toss in flames for ever!---  
 Ah, impotence of rage!---What am I?---Where?  
 Sad, silent, all?---The forms of dumb despair,  
 Around some mournful tomb!---What do I see?  
 This soft abode of innocence and love  
 Turn'd to the house of death! a place of horror!---  
 Ah! that poor corse! pale! pale! deform'd with murder!  
 Is that my *Sigismunda*! [*Throwing herself down by her.*

*Sig.* [*After a pathetic pause, looking on the scene before him.*

Have I liv'd  
 To these enfeebled years, by heaven reserv'd,  
 To be a dreadful monument of justice?---

*Rudolpho,*



*Rodolpho*, raise the king, and bear him hence  
From this distracting scene of blood and death.

Alas! I dare not give him my assistance;  
My care would only more enflame his rage.

Behold the fatal work of my dark hand,  
That by rude force the passions would command,  
That ruthless sought to root them from the breast;  
They may be rul'd, but will not be oppress'd.  
Taught hence, ye parents, who from nature stray,  
And the great ties of social life betray;  
Ne'er with your children act a tyrant's part:  
'Tis yours to guide, not violate the heart.  
Ye vainly wise, who o'er mankind preside,  
Behold my righteous woes, and drop your pride!  
Keep virtue's simple path before your eyes,  
Nor think from evil good can ever rise.

*End of the Fifth Act.*

EPILOGUE.

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# EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Miss BUDGELL.

**C**Ramm'd to the throat with wholesome moral stuff,  
Alas ! poor audience ! you have had enough.  
Was ever hapless heroine of a play  
In such a piteous plight as ours to-day ?  
Was ever woman so by love betray'd ?  
Match'd with two husbands, and yet---die a maid.  
But bless me !---hold---What sounds are these I hear !----  
I see the Tragic Muse herself appear.

The back-scene opens, and discovers a romantic Sylvan landscape; from which Mrs. Cibber, in the character of the Tragic Muse, advances slowly to music, and speaks the following lines.

Hence with your flippant epilogue, that tries  
To wipe the virtuous tear from British eyes ;  
That dares my moral, tragic scene profane,  
With strains—at best, unsuited, light and vain.

Hence

## EPILOGUE.

*Hence from the pure unfully'd beams that play  
In yon fair eyes where virtue shines——Away!*

*Britons, to you from chaste Castalian groves,  
Where dwell the tender, oft unhappy loves;  
Where shades of heroes roam, each mighty name,  
And court my aid to rise again to fame;  
To you I come, to freedom's noble seat,  
And in Britannia fix my last retreat.*

*In Greece and Rome, I watch'd the public weal;  
The purple tyrant trembled at my steel:  
Nor did I less o'er private sorrows reign,  
And mend the melting heart with softer pain.  
On France and You then rose my brightning star,  
With social ray——The arts are ne'er at war.  
O as your fire and genius stronger blaze,  
As yours are generous freedom's bolder lays,  
Let not the Gallic taste leave yours behind,  
In decent manners and in life refin'd;  
Banish the motly mode, to tag low verse,  
The laughing ballad to the mournful herse.  
When thro' five acts your hearts have learnt to glow,  
Touch'd with the sacred force of honest woe;  
O keep the dear impression on your breast,  
Nor idly lose it for a wretched jest.*

C O R I.

*CORIOLANUS.*

A

TRAGEDY.

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# PROLOGUE.

Written by

The Hon. GEORGE LYTTLETON, Esq;

Spoken by Mr. *Quin*.

*I* Come not here your candour to implore  
For scenes, whose author is, alas! no more;  
He wants no advocate his cause to plead;  
You will yourselves be patrons of the dead.  
No party his benevolence confin'd,  
No sect—alike it flow'd to all mankind.  
He lov'd his friends (forgive this gushing tear :  
Alas! I feel I am no actor here)  
He lov'd his friends with such a warmth of heart,  
So clear of int'rest, so devoid of art,  
Such generous freedom, such unshaken zeal,  
No words can speak it, but our tears may tell.—  
O candid truth, O faith without a stain,  
O manners gently firm, and nobly plain,  
O sympathizing love of others bliss,  
Where will you find another breast like his?  
Such was the man—the poet well you know :  
Oft has he touch'd your hearts with tender woe :  
Oft in this croud'd house, with just applause,  
You heard him teach fair virtue's purest laws;  
For his chaste muse employ'd her heav'n-taught lyre,  
None but the noblest passions to inspire,  
Not one immoral, one corrupted thought,

*One*

## PROLOGUE.

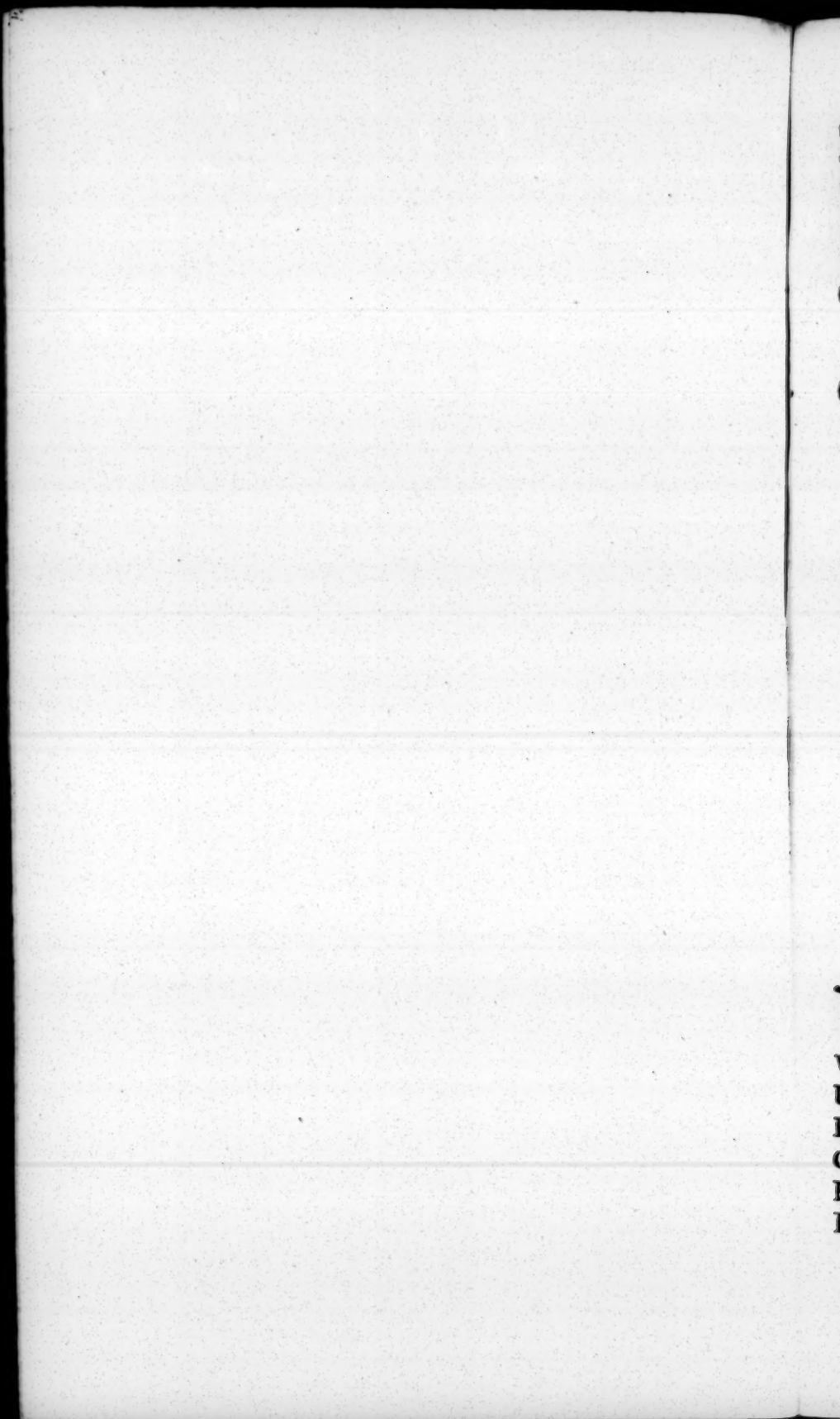
*One line, when dying he could wish to blot.  
Oh, may to-night your favourable doom  
Another laurel add to grace his tomb:  
Whilst he, superior now to praise or blame,  
Hears not the feeble voice of human fame.  
Yet if to those whom most on earth he lov'd,  
From whom his pious care is now remov'd,  
With whom his liberal hand, and bounteous heart,  
Shar'd all his little fortune could impart;  
If to those friends your kind regard shall give  
What they no longer can from his receive,  
That, that, even now, above yon starry pole,  
May touch with pleasure his immortal soul.*

Persons

## Persons represented.

- CAIUS MARCIUS CORIOLANUS. *Mr. Quin.*  
 ATTIVS TULLUS, general of the } *Mr. Ryan.*  
*Volscian* army.  
 GALESUS, one of the deputies of } *Mr. Delane.*  
 the *Volscian* states attending the }  
 camp.  
 The other deputies of the *Volscian*  
 states.  
 VOLUSIUS, one of the principal } *Mr. Sparks.*  
*Volscian* officers.  
 TITUS, freed-man of GALESUS. *Mr. Ridout.*  
 MARCIUS MINUCIUS, consul and } *Mr. Bridg-*  
 principal of the deputation from } *water.*  
*Rome* to CORIOLANUS.  
 POSTHUMUS COMINIUS, a con- } *Mr. Ander-*  
 sular senator, one of the deputati- } *son.*  
 on, and who had been the *Roman* }  
 general at the taking of *Corioli*.  
 VETURIA, mother of CORIOLA- } *Mrs. Woffing-*  
 NUS. } *ton.*  
 VOLUMNIA, wife of CORIOLANUS. *Miss Bellamy.*  
*Roman* senators, priests, augurs, &c. of the first de-  
 putation. *Roman* ladies, in the train of VETU-  
 RIA and VOLUMNIA, of the second deputation.  
*Volscian* OFFICERS, LICTORS, SOLDIERS, &c.

SCENE, The *Volscian* Camp.





# CORIO LANUS.

A

## TRAGEDY.

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### ACT I. SCENE I.

*The Volscian Camp.*

ATTIUS TULLUS, VOLUSIUS.

VOLUSIUS.

**W**Hence is it, *Tullus*, that our arms are stopt  
Here on the borders of the *Roman* state ?  
Why sleeps that spirit, whose heroic ardor  
Urg'd you to break the truce, and pour'd our host,  
From all th' united cantons of the *Volsci*,  
On their unguarded frontier ? Such designs  
Brook not an hour's delay ; their whole success  
Depends on instant vigorous execution.

P 2

*Tul*



*Tul. Volufius*, I approve thy brave impatience;  
 And will to thee, in confidence of friendship,  
 Disclose my secret soul. Thou know'st *Galefus*,  
 Whose freedom *Caius Marcius*, once his guest,  
 Of all the spoil of sack'd *Corioli*,  
 Alone demanded; and who thence to *Rome*,  
 From gratitude and friendship, follow'd *Marcius*;  
 Whence lately to our *Antium* he return'd,  
 With overtures of peace propos'd by *Rome*.

*Vol.* I know him well; an antiquated sage  
 Of that romantic school *Pythagoras*  
 Establish'd here on our *Hesperian* shore;  
 Whose gentle dictates only serve to tame  
 Enfeebled mortals into slaves.

*Tul.* *Galefus*,  
 Doubtless, possesses many civil virtues;  
 Is gentle, good; for rectitude of heart  
 And innocence of life by all rever'd.

*Vcl.* Pardon me, *Tullus*, if my faithful bluntness  
 Deems you too lib'ral in his praise. In peace  
 Such may perhaps do well, when prating rules  
 An idle world; but in tempestuous times  
 They are stark naught, these visionary statesmen,  
 Fit rulers only for their golden age.  
 The rugged genius of rapacious *Rome*  
 For other men, and other counsels, calls.

*Tul.* Your thoughts are mine---I only meant to tell  
 thee  
 The part he bears in this ill-tim'd delay.

Soon as our gather'd army march'd from *Antium*,  
 The *Roman* senate, whose attentive caution  
 Watch'd all our motions, took at once th' alarm;  
 And sent a herald, ere we past their borders,  
 With formal ceremony, to demand  
 The cause of our approach.---Had I been master,  
 I would have answer'd at the gates of *Rome*.  
 But this *Galefus*, who attends our camp

Among

Among the *Volscian* deputies, so pleaded  
 The laws of nations, made such loud complaints  
 Against th' infraction of the public faith,  
 So teased us with the pedantry of states,  
 That I was forc'd, unwilling, to permit  
 His freedman *Titus*, to be sent to *Rome*  
 With our demands. If these the senate grants,  
 We then are in the toils of peace entangled,  
 In spite of all my efforts to avoid them.

*Vol.* O 'tis a wild chimera! Peace with *Rome*!  
 Dream not of that, unless the *Volscian* courage  
 Is quite subdu'd, and only seeks to gild  
 A vile submission with that specious name.  
 Learn wisdom from your neighbours. Peace with *Rome*  
 Has quell'd the *Latines*, tam'd their freeborn spirit,  
 And by her friendship honour'd them with chains.

*Tul.* She ne'er will grant it on the just conditions  
 I now have brought the *Volsci* to demand:  
 The restitution of our conquer'd cities,  
 And fair alliance upon equal terms.  
 I know the *Roman* insolence will scorn  
 To yield to this: and *Titus* must return  
 Within three days, the longest term allow'd him;  
 Of which the third is near elaps'd already.  
 Then even *Galesus* will not dare to stop us  
 With superstitious forms, and solemn trifles,  
 From letting loose th' unbridled rage of war  
 Against those hated tyrants of *Hesperia*.

*Vol.* Thanks to the gods! my sword will then be  
 free.

Then, poor *Corioli*! thy bleeding wounds,  
 Thy treasures sack'd, thy captive matrons then,  
 Shall amply be reveng'd by thy *Volusus*:  
 Then, *Tullus*, from the lofty brows of *Marcus*  
 Thou may'st regain the wreaths his conquering hand,  
 By partial fortune aided, tore from thine.

*Tul.* O my *Volusius*! thou, who art a soldier,  
 A try'd and brave one too, say, in thy heart  
 Dost thou not scorn me? thou, who saw'st me bend  
 Beneath the half-spent thunder of a foe,  
 Warm from the conquest of *Corioli*,  
 Which rushing furious in with those, whose sally  
 He had repell'd, he seiz'd almost alone;  
 And gave to fire and sword. Yet thence he flew,  
 Scorning the plunder of our richest city,  
 His wounds undrest, without a moment's respite,  
 To where our armies on the fearful edge  
 Of battle stood; and, asking of the consul  
 To be oppos'd to me, with mighty rage,  
 Resiftless, bore us down.

*Vol.* True valour, *Tullus*,  
 Lies in the mind, the never-yielding purpose,  
 Nor owns the blind award of giddy fortune.

*Tul.* My soul, my friend, my soul is all on fire!  
 Thirst of revenge consumes me! the revenge  
 Of generous emulation, not of hatred.  
 This happy *Roman*, this proud *Marcus* haunts me.  
 Each troubled night when slaves and captives sleep,  
 Forgetful of their chains, I, in my dreams,  
 Anew am vanquish'd; and beneath the sword  
 With horror sinking, feel a tenfold death,  
 The death of honour. But I will redeem—  
 Yes, *Marcus*, I will yet redeem my fame.  
 To face thee once again is the great purpose  
 For which alone I live.—Till then how slow,  
 How tedious lags the time! while shame corrodes me,  
 With many a bitter thought; and injur'd honour  
 Sick, and desponding, preys upon itself.

*Vol.* It fast approaches now, the hour of vengeance,  
 To this fam'd land, to ancient *Latium* due.  
 Unbalanc'd *Rome*, at variance with herself,

To order lost, in deep and hot commotions  
 Stands on the dangerous point of civil war;  
 Her haughty nobles and seditious commons  
 Reviling, fearing, hating one another:  
 While, on our part, all wears a prosperous face;  
 Our troops united, numerous, high in spirit,  
 As if their gen'ral's soul inform'd them all.  
 O long-expected day!

*Tul.* Go, brave *Volufius*,  
 Go breathe thy ardour into every breast,  
 That when the *Volsian* envoy shall return,  
 Whom ere the close of evening I expect,  
 One spirit may unite us in the cause  
 Of generous freedom, and our native rights,  
 So long oppress'd by *Rome's* encroaching power.

S C E N E II.

*TULLUS alone.*

*Gaius* said that *Marcus* stands for consul.  
 O favour thou his suit, propitious *Jove*!  
 That I may brave him at his army's head,  
 In all the majesty of sovereign pow'r!  
 That the whole conduct of the war may rest  
 On us alone, and prove by its decision,  
 Which of the two is worthier to command——

S C E N E III.

*TULLUS, OFFICER.*

*Tul.* Ha! why this haste? you look alarm'd.  
*Off.* My lord,  
 One of exalted port, his visage hid,  
 Has plac'd himself upon your sacred hearth,  
 Beneath the dread protection of your *Lares*;  
 And sits majestic there in solemn silence.



344 CORIOLANUS.

*Tul.* Did you not ask him who, and what he was?

*Off.* My lord, I could not speak; I felt appall'd,  
As if the presence of some God had struck me.

*Tul.* Come, dastard! let me find this man of terrors.

SCENE IV.

*The back scene opens, and discovers CORIOLANUS as described above.*

CORIOLANUS, TULLUS.

*TULLUS, after some silence.*

Illustrious stranger—for thy high demeanour  
Bespeaks thee such—who art thou?

*Cor.* [*Rising and unmuffling his face.*

View me, *Tullus*—

[*After some pause.*

Dost thou not know me?

*Tul.* No. That noble front

I never saw before. What is thy name?

*Cor.* Does not the secret voice of hostile instinct,  
Does not thy swelling heart declare me to thee?

*Tul.* Gods! can it be?—

*Cor.* Yes. I am *Caius Marcius*;

Known to thy smarting country by the name

Of *Coriolanus*. That alone is left me,

That empty name, for all my toils, my service,

The blood which I have shed for thankless *Rome*.

Behold me banish'd thence, a victim yielded

By her weak nobles to the maddening rabble.

I seek revenge. Thou may'st employ my sword,

With keener edge, with heavier force against her,

Than e'er it fell upon the *Volscian* nation.

But if thou, *Tullus*, dost refuse me this,

The only wish of my collected heart,

Where



Where every passion in one burning point  
 Concenters, give me death : Death from thy hand  
 I sure have well deserv'd—Nor shall I blush  
 To take or life or death from *Attius Tullus*.

*Tul.* O *Caius Marcius* ! in this one short moment,  
 That we have friendly talk'd, my rayish'd heart  
 Has undergone a great, a wondrous change.  
 I ever held thee in my best esteem;  
 But this heroic confidence has won me,  
 Stamp't me at once thy friend. I were indeed  
 A wretch as mean as this thy trust is noble,  
 Could I refuse thee thy demand—Yes, *Marcus* !  
 Thou hast thy wish ! take half of my command.  
 If that be not enough, then take the whole.  
 We have, my friend, a gallant force on foot,  
 An army, *Marcus*, fit to follow thee.  
 Go lead them on, and take thy full revenge.  
 All should unite to punish the ungrateful.  
 Ingratitude is treason to mankind.

CORIOLANUS, embracing him.

Thus generous *Tullus*, take a soldier's thanks,  
 Who is not practis'd in the gloss of words—  
 Thou friend in deed ! friend to my cause, my quarrel !  
 Friend to the darling passion of my soul !  
 All else I set at nought !—Immortal gods !  
 I am new-made, and wonder at myself !  
 A little while ago, and I was nothing ;  
 A powerless reptile, crawling on the earth,  
 Curs'd with a soul that restless wish'd to wield  
 The bolts of *Jove* ! I dwelt in *Erebus*,  
 I wander'd through the hopeless gloom of hell,  
 Stung with revenge, tormented by the furies !  
 Now, *Tullus*, like a god, you draw me thence,  
 Throne me amidst the skies, with tempest charg'd,  
 And put the ready thunder in my hand !

*Tul.* What I have promis'd, *Marcus*, I will do.  
 Within an hour at farthest we expect  
 The freedman of *Galesus* back from *Rome*,  
 Who carry'd to the senate our demands.  
 Their answer will, I doubt not, end the truce,  
 And instant draw our angry swords against them.  
 Till then retire within my inmost tent,  
 Unknown to all but me, that when our chiefs  
 Meet in full council to declare for war,  
 I may produce thee to their wondering eyes,  
 As if descended from avenging heaven  
 To humble lofty *Rome*, and teach her justice.

*Cor.* To thy direction, *Tullus*, I resign  
 My future life: my fate is in thy hands;  
 And, if I judge aright the fate of *Rome*.

*End of the first Act.*

## ACT II. SCENE I.

GALESUS, TITUS..

GALESUS.

**I**NDEED! my *Titus*, I had hopes that *Rome*,  
 Vext as she is with her domestic broils,  
 Her frontier weak, her armies unprepar'd,  
 Might have comply'd with our demands, and given us  
 The same alliance granted to the *Latines*.

*Tit.* The senate scarce would hear the terms I offer'd;  
 But order'd me to bear this answer back:

“ If first the *Volsi* take up arms, the *Romans*

“ Will be the last to lay them down.”

*Gal.*

Alas!

This answer seals the doom of many a wretch.  
 Unchain'd *Bellona* from her temple rushes,

With

With all the crimes and vices in her train.  
 Earth fades at her approach. To rural peace,  
 Fair plenty, and the social joy of cities,  
 Soon will succeed rage, rapine, devastation,  
 Each cruel horror sanctify'd by names.

O mortals ! mortals ! when will you, content  
 With nature's bounty, that in fuller flow,  
 Still as your labours open more its sources,  
 Abundant gushes o'er the happy world ;  
 When will you banish violence, and outrage  
 To dwell with beasts of prey in woods and deserts ?

*Tit.* Never till *Rome* shall change her conquering  
 maxims.

*Gal.* Her haughty spirit now will soar beyond  
 Its usual pitch, upborne by *Caius Marcius*.  
 Stands he not for the consulate ?

*Tit.* He did.

But is no more a citizen of *Rome*.

*Gal.* What mean'st thou, *Titus* ?

*Tit.* *Marcius* is from *Rome*

Banish'd for ever.

*Gal.* O immortal powers !

On what pretence could they to exile doom  
 Their wisest captain, and their bravest soldier ?  
 Nor less renown'd for piety, for justice,  
 An uncorrupted heart, and purest manners.

*Tit.* The charge against him was entirely groundless.  
 What not his enemies themselves believ'd,  
 Affecting of tyrannic power in *Rome*.  
 His real crime was only some hot words,  
 Struck from his fiery temper, in the senate,  
 Against those factious ministers of discord,  
 The tribunes of the people. They to rage,  
 And frantic fury, rous'd the mad plebeians ;  
 By whom supported in their bold attempt,  
 They durst presume to summon to the bar.

Of an enrag'd and partial populace,  
 The most illustrious senator of *Rome*.  
 To this the nobles yielded——and, with his,  
 Gave up their own and childrens rights for ever.

*Gal.* O shameful weakness in a *Roman* senate,  
 So much renown'd for firmness ! yet my *Titus*,  
 Spite of my love to *Marcus*, I must own it,  
 The vigorous soil whence his heroic virtues  
 Luxuriant rise, if not with careful hand  
 Severely weeded, teems with imperfections.  
 His lofty spirit brooks no opposition.  
 His rage, if once offended, knows no bounds.  
 He deems plebeians, with patrician blood  
 Compar'd, the creatures of a lower species,  
 Mere menial hands by nature meant to serve him.

*Tit.* It was this high patrician pride undid him.  
 The furious people triumph'd in his ruin  
 As if they had expell'd another *Tarquin* :  
 While, like a captive train, the vanquish'd nobles  
 Hung their dejected heads in silent shame.  
*Marcus* alone seem'd unconcern'd ; tho' deep  
 The latent tempest boil'd within his breast,  
 Choak'd up and smother'd with excessive rage.

*Gal.* You were his guest at *Rome*, and therefore, *Titus*,  
 Might on this sad occasion be permitted  
 To join your tears with his domestic friends.  
 Saw you that moving scene ?

*Tit.* I did, *Galesus*.  
 I follow'd *Marcus* home---His mother, there,  
*Veturia*, the most venerable matron  
 These eyes have e'er beheld, and soft *Volumnia*,  
 His lovely virtuous wife amidst his children,  
 Spred on the ground, lay lost in dumb despair.  
 He swelling flood a while, and could not speak,  
 Th' affronted hero struggling with the man ;  
 Then thus at last he broke the gloomy silence ;

“ 'Tis



" 'Tis done. The guilty sentence is pronounc'd.

" Ungrateful *Rome* has cast me from her bosom,

" Support this blow with fortitude and courage,

" As it becomes two generous *Roman* matrons.

" I recommend my children to your care.

" Farewel. I go, I quit, without regret,

" A city grown an enemy to virtue."

*Gal.* Oh godlike *Marcus* ! oh unconquer'd strength.

And dignity of mind ! How much superior

Is such a soul to all the power of fortune !

*Tit.* This said, he sternly try'd to break away :

When, holding in his hand his eldest son,

*Veturia* follow'd ; while the poor *Volumnia*,

All drown'd in tears, and bearing in one arm

Their youngest, yet an infant, with the other

Hung clinging at his knees—he, turning to them,

Half soften'd, half severe, breath'd from his soul

These broken accents—" Cease your vain complaints.

" Mother, you have no more a son ; and thou,

" Thou best of women ! thou, my dear *Volumnia* !

" No more a husband"—Pierc'd with these dire words

*Volumnia* lifeless sunk : and off he flung,

With wild precipitation.

*Gal.*

Thy sad tale

Blinds my old eyes with tears—But whither, tell me,

O whither, *Titus*, bent he then his course ?

*Tit.* Where the blind genius of regardless rage

And desperation led. On to the gate,

*Capena* call'd, attended by the nobles,

He stalk'd in sullen majesty along ;

Nor deign'd a word. A godlike virtuous anger

Beam'd thro' his features, and sublim'd his air.

With downcast eyes he walk'd ; or, if aside

He chanc'd to look, each look was great reproach.

Thus in emphatic silence, that made words

Void and insipid all, he parted from them,

The



The day preceding my return from *Rome* ;  
Nor has been heard of since, lost in th' abyſs  
Of his own woes.

*Gal.* O *Marcus*, noble *Marcus* !  
How ſhall my friendſhip ſuccour thy diſtreſs ?  
Where ſhall I find thee, to partake thy ſorrows,  
And make myſelf companion of thy exile ?

But, *Titus*, we indulge diſcourſe too long——  
Go, and aſſemble thou the *Volſcian* chiefs,  
Whilst I repair to *Tullus*, to inform,  
And bring him to the council, there to hear  
The fatal answer thou haſt brought from *Rome*..

## S C E N E II.

*Changes to TULLUS's tent.*

CORIOLANUS, TULLUS.

*Cor.* Forgive me, *Tullus*, if I count the moments  
That ſtop the purpoſe of thy noble kindneſs,  
And keep me here confin'd in tame inaction.  
Why lingers *Titus* ?

*Tul.* Calm thy reſtleſs heart,  
Brave *Marcus* ; every minute I expect him.  
Soon from the cloud that hides thee, ſhalt thou break  
With double brightneſs, ſoon thy ſery rage  
Shall wither all the ſtrength and pride of *Rome*.

*Cor.* O righteous *Jove*, proteſtor of the injur'd !  
If from my earlieſt youth, with ſacred awe,  
I ſtill have reverenc'd thy almighty juſtice,  
Still by her ſacred dictates rul'd my actions ;  
O let that juſtice now ſupport my cauſe,  
And arm my ſtrong right-hand with all her terrors !  
When that is done, be life or death my lot,  
As thy almighty pleaſure ſhall determine.

[Enter an officer to Tullus.  
*Off.*

*Off.* My lord, *Galejus* asks admittance to you.

*Tul.* *Marcus*, retire an instant, till I hear  
The business brings him hither—Bid him enter.

[*Exit officer and Coriolanus.*

[*Enter Galejus.*

## SCENE III.

TULLUS, GALEJUS.

*Gal.* *Tullus*, the Roman senate has return'd  
No other answer, to our late demands,  
But absolute denial and defiance.

*Tul.* It is what I expected—We shall teach them  
An humbler language soon—Hast thou assembled,  
As I desir'd, the *Volscian* chiefs in council?

*Gal.* *Titus* is gone to summon their attendance.

*Tul.* It is enough—Come forth my noble guest!  
And shew *Galejus* how the gods assist us.

## SCENE IV.

CORIOLANUS, TULLUS, GALEJUS.

*Gal.* O my astonish'd soul! what do I see?  
What! *Caius Marcus*! *Caius Marcus* here,  
Beneath one tent with *Tullus*?

*Tul.* Ay, and more,  
With *Tullus*, now his friend and fellow soldier.  
Yes, thou shalt see him thundering at the head  
Of *Volscian* armies; he, who oft has carry'd  
Destruction thro' their ranks—Your leave a moment,  
While to our chiefs, and fathers, I announce  
Their unexpected guest.

## SCENE

## SCENE V.

CORIOLANUS, GALESUS.

*Cor.* Thou good old man !  
 Close let me strain thee to my faithful heart,  
 Which now is doubly thine, united more  
 By the protection which thy country gives me,  
 Than by our former friendship.

*Gal.* Strange event !  
 This is thy work, almighty providence !  
 Whose power, beyond the stretch of human thought,  
 Revolves the orbs of empire ; bids them sink  
 Deep in the deadning night of thy displeasure,  
 Or rise majestic o'er a wondering world.  
 The gods by thee — I see it, *Coriolanus*, —  
 Mean to exalt us, and depress the *Romans*.

*Cor.* *Galesus*, yes, the gods have sent me hither ;  
 Those righteous gods, who, when vindictive justice  
 Excites them to destroy a worthless people,  
 Make their own crimes and follies strike the blow.

*Gal.* Cherish these thoughts, that teach us what we are,  
 And tame the pride of man. There is a power,  
 Unseen that rules th' illimitable world,  
 That guides its motions, from the brightest star,  
 To the least dust of this sin-tainted mold ;  
 While man, who madly deems himself the lord  
 Of all, is nought but weakness and dependance.  
 This sacred truth, by sure experience taught,  
 Thou must have learnt, when wandering all alone,  
 Each bird, each insect, flitting thro the sky,  
 Was more sufficient for itself, than thou —  
 Ah the full image of thy woes dissolves me !  
 The pangs that must have torn, at parting from thee,  
 Thy mother and thy wife. I cannot think

Of

Of that sad scene without some drops of pity !

*Cor.* Who was it forc'd me to that bitter parting ?  
 Who, in one cruel, hasty moment, chas'd me  
 From wife, from children, friends, and household gods,  
 Me ! who so often had protected theirs ?  
 Who, from the sacred city of my fathers  
 Drove me with nature's commoners to dwell,  
 To lodge beneath their wide unshelter'd roof,  
 And at their table feed ? O blast me, gods !  
 With ev'ry woe ! debility of mind,  
 Dishonour, just contempt, and palsy'd weakness,  
 If I forgive the villains ! yes *Galesus*,  
 Yes, I will offer to the powers of vengeance  
 A great, a glorious victim — a whole city !---  
 Why, *Tullus*, this delay ?

*Gal.* May *Coriolanus*  
 Be to the *Volscian* nation, and himself,  
 The dread, the godlike instrument of justice !  
 But let not rage and vengeance mix their rancour ;  
 Let them not trouble with their fretful storm,  
 Their angry gleams, that azure, where enthron'd  
 The calm divinity of justice sits  
 And pities, while she punishes, mankind.

*Cor.* What saidst thou ? What, against the powers of  
 vengeance ?  
 The gods gave honest anger, just revenge,  
 To be the awful guardians of the rights  
 And native dignity of human kind.  
 O were it not for them, the saucy world  
 Would grow a noisome nest of little tyrants !  
 Each carrion crow, on eagle merit perch'd,  
 Would peck his eyes out, and the mungril cur  
 At pleasure bait the lion---No, *Galesus*,  
 I would not rashly, nor on light occasion,  
 Receive the deep impression in my breast ;  
 But when the base, the brutal and unjust,

Or

Or worse than all, th' ungrateful, stamp it there ;  
 O I will then with luxury supreme,  
 Enjoy the pleasure of offended gods,  
 A righteous, just revenge !---Behold my soul.

[*Enter an Officer.*]

*Of.* My lords, th' assembled chiefs desire your presence.

*Gal.* Come, noble *Marcus* ; let my joyful hand  
 Conduct thee thither---Doubt not thy reception  
 Will be proportion'd to thy fame and merit.

### SCENE VI.

*The back scene opens, and discovers the deputies of the Volscian States, assembled in council. They rise and salute Coriolanus ; then resume their places.*

GALESUS, TULLUS, CORIOLANUS, SENATORS.

*Gal.* Assembled states, and captains of the *Volsci*,  
 Behold the chief so much renown'd in war ;  
 Our once so formidable foe, but now  
 Our proffer'd friend and soldier---*Caius Marcus*.

*1st. Sen.* We give him hearty welcome from our souls.

*Cor.* Most noble chiefs, and fathers of the *Volsci*,  
 I need not say, how by the people's rage,  
 And the poor weakness of the timid nobles,  
 I am expell'd from *Rome*. Had I confin'd  
 My wishes merely to a safe retreat,  
 Some *Latine* city might have given me that ;  
 Or any nameless corner. What imports it,  
 Where a tame patient exile rots in silence ?  
 But, *Volscian* lords, permit me to declare,  
 I would at once cut short my useless days,  
 Rather than be that despicable wretch,  
 Who neither can take vengeance on his foes,

Nor



Nor serve his friends. That is my temper, chiefs.  
 I shall be glad to merit, by my sword,  
 Th' asylum which I seek among the *Volsci*.  
*Rome* is our common foe: Then let us join  
 Our common sufferings, passions, and resentments.  
 Yes, tho but one, I bring so many wrongs,  
 So large a share of powerful enmity,  
 Into the war, as gives me the presumption,  
 To offer to the *Volscian* states th' alliance  
 Even of my single arm.——

*Tul.* That single arm  
 Is in itself a numerous army, *Marcus*;  
 The *Volscians* so esteem it——But proceed.

*Cor.* I will not mention, *Volscian* chiefs, what talent  
 The world allows me to possess in war:  
 But be that what it will, you may employ it.  
 Soldier, or captain, in whatever station  
 You place me, I will lose each drop of blood,  
 Or with this hand I'll fix the *Volscian* standard  
 On the proud towers of capitolian *Jove*.

*Tul.* Chiefs of the *Volscian* league, I give you joy  
 Of our new citizen, the noble *Marcus*.  
 The genius of the *Volscian* state has sent him,  
 Whetted by wrongs into a keener hatred  
 Than that we bear to *Rome*. It were contemning,  
 With impious self-sufficient arrogance,  
 This bounty of the gods, not to accept,  
 With every mark of honour, of his service.  
 I, *Volscians*, I, even *Attius Tullus*, give,  
 First of you all, my voice, that *Caius Marcus*  
 Be now receiv'd to high command among us;  
 That instantly we do appoint him general  
 Of half our troops, which here, with your consent,  
 I to him yield.---Speak, chiefs, is this your pleasure?  
*1st. Sen.* It is,——We give unanimous consent.

TULLUS,

TULLUS, embracing him.

*Marcus*, I joy to call thee my companion,  
And colleague in this war.

*Cor.*

By all the gods !

Thou art the generous victor of my soul !

Yes, *Tullus*, I am conquer'd by thy virtue.

*Gal.* Tho I have oft, on great occasions, *Tullus*,  
Beheld thee in the senate, and the field,  
Cover'd with glory ; yet, I must avow,  
I never saw thee shew such genuine greatness,  
Such true sublimity of soul, as now.

To scorn th' all-powerful charm of selfish passions,  
Chiefly the dazzling pride of emulation,  
That noble weakness of heroic minds,  
To sink thyself that thou may'st raise thy country ;  
To put the sword into thy rival's hand,  
And twine thy promis'd laurels round his brow——  
O 'tis a flight beyond the highest point  
Of martial glory ! and what few can reach.  
Go forth, ye chosen ministers of justice ;  
And may that awful power, whose secret hand  
Sways all our passions, turns our partial views  
All to its own dread purposes, attend you !

*Cor.* I burn to enter on the glorious task  
You now have mark'd me out. How slow the time  
To the warm soul, that in the very instant  
It forms, would execute, a great design.  
'Tis my advice we march direct to *Rome* ;  
We cannot be too quick. Let the first dawn  
See us in bright array before her walls.  
Perhaps when they behold their exile there,  
Back'd by your force, some conscious hearts among them  
May feel th' alarm of guilt.

*Tul.*

I much approve

Of

Of this advice. 'Tis what I thought before,  
 Ere strengthen'd, *Marcus*, by thy mighty arm :  
 But now 'tis doubly right. Here, *Volscian* chiefs,  
 Here let our council terminate—The troops  
 Have had repose sufficient. Strait to *Rome*,  
 Come, let us urge our march —As yet the stars  
 Ride in their middle watch : we shall with ease,  
 Reach it by dawn.—

*Cor.* Yes we have time —too much !  
 Six tedious hours till morn—But hence! away !  
 My soul on fire anticipates the dawn.

*End of the Second Act.*

### ACT III. SCENE I.

CORIANUS, TULLUS, VOLUSIUS, TITUS, *with a  
 crowd of Volscian Officers. Acclamations behind the  
 scenes.*

CORIANUS.

NO more—I merit not this lavish praise,  
 True, we have driven the *Roman* legions back,  
 Defeated, and disgrac'd —But what is this ?  
 Nothing, ye *Volsci*, nothing yet is done.  
 We but begin the wondrous leaf of story,  
 That marks the *Roman* doom. At length it dawns,  
 The destin'd hour, that eases of their fears  
 The nations round, and sets *Hesperia* free.  
 Come on, my brave companions of the war !  
 Come, let us finish at one mighty stroke  
 This toil of labouring fate—We will, or perish !  
 While, noble *Tullus*, you protect the camp,

I, with

I, with my troops, all men of chosen valour,  
And well-approv'd to-day, will storm the city.

*Tit.* Beneath thy animating conduct, *Marcus*,  
What can the *Volscian* valour not perform?  
Thy very sight and voice subdues the *Romans*.  
When lifting up your helm, you shew'd your face,  
That like a comet glar'd destruction on them,  
I saw their bravest veterans fly before thee.  
Their ancient spirit has with thee forsook them,  
And ruin hangs o'er yon devoted walls.

[Enter an officer, who addresses himself to Coriolanus.]

*Off.* My lord, a herald is arriv'd from *Rome*,  
To say, a deputation from the senate,  
Attended by the ministers of heaven,  
A venerable train of priests and flamens,  
Is on the way address'd to you.

*Cor.* To me!

What can this message mean!—Stand to your arms,  
Ye *Volscian* troops; and let these *Romans* pass  
Betwixt the lowring frown of double files.  
What! do they think me such a milky boy,  
To pay my vengeance with a few soft words.  
Come, fellow soldiers, *Tullus*, come, and see,  
If I betray the honours you have done me.

[Goes out with a train of Volscian Officers.]

## S C E N E II.

TULLUS, VOLUSIUS, who remain.

VOLUSIUS, after some silence.

Are we not, *Tullus*, failing in our duty  
Not to attend our general?

*Tul.* How! what saidst thou?

*Vol.* Methought, my lord, his parting orders were,  
We should attend the triumph now preparing

O'er



O'er all his foes at once—*Romans and Volsci!*  
Come, we shall give offence.

*Tul.* Of this no more.

I pray thee spare thy bitter irony.

*Vol.* Shall I then speak without disguise?

*Tul.* Speak out

With all the honest bluntness of a friend.

Think'st thou I fear the truth?

*Vol.* Then, *Tullus*, know,

Thou art no more the general of the *Volsci*.

Thou hast, by this thy generous weakness, sunk

Thyself into a private man of *Antium*.

Yes, thou hast taken from thy laurel'd brow

The well-earn'd trophies of thy toils and perils,

Thy springing hopes, the fairest ever budded,

And heap'd them on a man too proud before.

*Tul.* He bears it high.

*Vol.* Death, and perdition! high!

With uncontroul'd command!—You see, already,

He will not be incumber'd with the fetters

Of our advice. He speaks his sovereign will!

On every hand he issues out his orders,

As to his natural slaves.—For you, my lord,

He has, I think, confin'd you to your camp,

There in inglorious indolence to languish;

While he, beneath your blasted eye, shall reap

The harvest of your honour.

*Tul.* No, *Volufius*,

Whatever honour shall by him be gain'd

Reverts to me, from whose superior bounty

He drew the means, of all his glorious deeds.

This mighty chief, this conqueror of *Rome*

Is but my creature.—

*Vol.* Wretched self-delusion;

He and the *Volscians* know he is thy master.

He acts as such in all things—Now by *Mars*,

Could my abhorrent soul endure the thought

Of



Of stooping to a *Roman* chief, I here  
Would leave thee in thy solitary camp,  
And go where glory calls.

*Tul.*

Indeed, *Volusus*,

I did expect more equal treatment from him.  
But what of that?—The generous pride of virtue  
Disdains to weigh too nicely the returns  
Her bounty meets with—Like the liberal gods,  
From her own gracious nature she bestows,  
Nor stoops to ask reward—Yet must I own,  
I thought he would not have so soon forgot  
What he so lately was, and what I am.

*Vol.* Gods! knew ye not his character before?

Did you not know his genius was to yours  
Averse, as are antipathies in nature?  
High, overweening, tyrannously proud,  
And only fit to hold command o'er slaves?  
Hence as repugnant to that equal life,  
Which is the quickening soul of all republics,  
The *Roman* people cast him forth; and we,  
Shall we receive the bane of their repose,  
Into our breast? Are we less free than they?  
Or shall we be more patient of a tyrant?

*Tul.* All this I knew. But while his imperfections  
Are thy glad theme, thou hast forgot his virtues.

*Vol.* I leave that subject to the smooth *Galesus*,  
And these his *Volscian* flatterers—His virtues!  
Trust me there is no insolence that treads  
So high as that which rears itself on virtue.

*Tul.* Well, be it so—I meant, that even his vices  
Should on this great occasion, serve the *Volsci*.

*Vol.* Confusion! there it is! there lurks the sting  
Of our dishonour! while this *Marcus* leads  
The *Roman* armies, ours are driven before him.  
Behold, he changes sides; when with him changes  
The fortune of the war. Strait they grow *Volsci*

And

And we victorious *Romans*—Such, no doubt,  
Such is his secret boast—Ay, this vile brand  
Success itself will fix for ever on us ;

And, *Tullus*, thou, 'tis thou must answer for it.

*Tul. aside.*] His words are daggers to my heart ; I  
feel

Their truth, but am ashamed to own my folly.

*Vol.* O shame ! O infamy ! the thought consumes me,  
It scalds my eyes with tears, to see a *Roman*  
Borne on our shoulders to immortal fame :  
Just in the happy moment that decided  
The long dispute of ages, that for which  
Our generous ancestors had toil'd and bled,  
To see him then step in and steal our glory !  
O that we first had perish'd all ! A people,  
Who cannot find in their own proper force  
Their own protection, are not worth the saving !

*Tul.* It must have way ! I will no more suppress it—

Know, then, my rough old friend, no less than thee  
His conduct hurts me and upbraids my folly.

I wake as from a dream. What demon mov'd me ?

What doating generosity ? his woes,  
Was it his woes ! to see the brave reduc'd  
To trust his mortal foe ? perhaps, a little  
That work'd within my bosom—But, *Volufius*,  
That was not all—I will to thee confess  
The weakness of my heart—Yes, it was pride,  
The dazzling pride to see my rival-warriour  
'The great *Coriolanus*, bend his soul,  
His haughty soul, to sue for my protection.  
Protection said I ? were it that alone,  
I had been base to have refus'd him that,  
'To have refus'd him aught a gallant foe  
Owes to a gallant foe.—But to exalt him  
'To the same level, nay above myself ;  
'To yield him the command of half my troops,

VOL. II.

Q

The

The choicest acting half—That, that was madness!  
Was weak, was mean, unworthy of a man!——

*Vol.* I scorn to flatter thee — It was indeed.

*Tul.* Curse on the slave *Gaius*! soothing, he  
Seiz'd the fond moment of infatuation,  
And clinch'd the chains my generous folly forg'd.  
How shall I from this labyrinth escape?  
Must it then be! what cruel genius dooms me,  
In war or peace to creep beneath his fortune?

*Vol.* That genius is thyself. If thou canst bear  
The very thought of stooping to this *Roman*,  
Thou from that moment art his vassal, *Tullus*;  
By that thou dost acknowledge, parent nature  
Has form'd him thy superior. But if fix'd  
Upon the base of manly resolution,  
Thou say'st—I will be free! I will command!  
I and my country! then—O never doubt it—  
We shall find means to crush this vain intruder;  
Even I myself—this hand—

Nay, hear me, *Tullus*,  
'Tis not yet come to that, that last resource.  
I do not say we should employ the dagger,  
While other, better means are in our power.

*Tul.* No, my *Volusius*, fortune will not drive us,  
Or I am much deceiv'd, to that extreme:  
We shall not want the strongest fairest plea,  
To give a solemn sanction to his fate.  
He will betray himself. Whate'er his rage  
Of passion talks, a weakness for his country  
Sticks in his soul, and he is still a *Roman*.  
Soon shall we see him tempted to the brink  
Of this sure precipice—Then down, at once,  
Without remorse, we hurl him to perdition!

But hark! the trumpet calls us to a scene  
I should detest, if not from hope we thence  
May gather matter to mature our purpose.

SCENE

## SCENE III.

*The back scene opens and discovers Coriolanus sitting on his tribunal, attended by his lictors, and a croud of Volscian officers. Files of troops drawn up on either hand. In the depth of the scene appear the deputies from the Roman senate, M. Minucius, Posthumus Cominius, Sp. Lartius, P. Pinnarius, and Q. Sulpitius, all consular senators, who had been his most zealous friends. And behind them march the priests, the sacrificers, the augurs, and the guardians of the sacred things, drest in their ceremonial habits. These advance slowly, betwixt the files of soldiers, under arms. As Tullus enters, Coriolanus rising salutes him.*

*Cor.* Here, noble Tullus, sit, and judge my conduct ;  
Nor spare to check me, if I act amiss.

*Tul.* Marcius, the Volscian fate is in thy hands.

*[Coriolanus is seated again, and Tullus places himself upon a tribunal on his left hand. Mean time the Roman deputies advance up to Coriolanus and salute him, which he returns.]*

*Cor.* What, Romans, from the generals of the Volsci  
Is your demand ?

*Min.* O Coriolanus, Rome,  
Nurse of thy tender years, thy parent-city,  
Her senators, her people, priests, and augurs,  
Her every order and degree, by us,  
Thy ever-zealous, still-unshaken friends,  
Sue in the most pathetic terms for peace.  
And if in this constrain'd, we from our maxim,  
Never to ask but give it, must depart ;  
It is some consolation in the state  
To which thou hast by thy superior valour  
Reduc'd us, that we ask it from a Roman.

Q 2

*Cor.*



*Cor.* I was a *Roman* once, and thought the name  
Was not dishonour'd by me ; but it pleas'd  
Your lords, the mob of *Rome*, to take it from me ;  
Nor will I now receive it back again.

*Min.* The name thou mayst reject, but canst not  
throw

The duties from thee which that name imports ;  
Indissoluble duties, bound upon thee  
By the strong hand of nature, and confirm'd  
By the dread sanction of all-ruling *Jove*.  
Then hear thy country's supplicating voice ;  
By all those duties I conjure thee hear us.

*Cor.* Well—I will hear thee ; speak, declare thy  
message.

*Min.* Give peace, give healing peace, to two brave  
nations,

Fatigu'd with war, and sick of cruel deeds !  
To carry on destruction's easy trade,  
Afflict mankind, and scourge the world with war,  
Is what each wicked, each ambitious man,  
Who lets his furious passions loose, may do :  
But in the flattering torrent of success,  
To check his rage, and drop th' avenging sword,  
When a repenting people ask it of him,  
'That is the genuine bounty of a god.  
'Then urge no farther this your just resentment :  
Which, injur'd as you are, you needs must feel,  
But never ought to carry into action,  
Against your sacred country ; whence you drew  
Your life, your virtues, every mortal good,  
That very valour you employ against her.  
Stop, *Coriolanus*, ere, beyond retreat,  
You plunge yourself in crimes. To the fierce joy  
Of vengeance push'd to barbarous excess,  
Repentance will succeed, and sickning horror.  
Consider too the slippery state of fortune.  
The gods take pleasure oft, when haughty mortals



On their own pride erect a mighty fabric,  
 By slightest means, to lay their towering schemes  
 Low in the dust, and teach them they are nothing.  
 Return, thou virtuous *Roman*! to the bosom  
 Of thy imploring country. Lo! her arms  
 She fondly spreads to take thee back again,  
 And by redoubled love efface her harshness.  
 Return, and crown thee with the noblest wreath  
 Which glory can bestow—the palm of mercy!

*Cor. Marcus Minucius, and ye other Romans,*  
 Respected senators, and holy flamens,  
 Attend, and take to your demand this answer:

Why court you me, the servant of the *Volsci*?

It is to them that you must bend for peace,  
 Which on these only terms they will accord you.

“ Restore the conquer’d lands, your former wars

“ Have ravish’d from them: from their towns and cities,

“ Won by your arms, withdraw your colonies;

“ And to the full immunities of *Rome*

“ Frankly admit them, as you have the *Latines*.”

Then, *Romans*, you have peace, and not till then!

If these are terms which suit not your ambition,

They suit the state to which the *Volscian* arms

Have now reduc’d you—We have learn’d from *Rome*

To use our fortune, and command the vanquish’d.

*Tul. aside.* Death to my hopes! I’m now his slave  
 for ever.

*Coriolanus, addressing himself to the Volsci.*

This, my illustrious patrons and protectors,

*Volsci*, to you I ow’d. Permit me now

To do myself and injur’d honour justice.

[Turning again to the Romans.]

As to the liberty you idly vaunt

To give me of returning to your city,

’Tis what I hold unworthy of acceptance.

Can I return into th’ ungrateful bosom

Of a distracted state, where, to the rage

Of a vile senseless populace, the laws  
 Are by your shameless weakness given a prey ?  
 Who are the men that hold the sway among you ?  
 And whom have you expell'd, as even unworthy  
 To live within the cincture of your walls ! —  
 O the wild thought breaks in and troubles reason ! —  
 With what, ye *Romans*, can the sowerest censor,  
 The most envenom'd malice, justly charge me ?  
 Did I e'er break your laws ? Nay, did I e'er  
 Do aught that could disturb the sacred order,  
 The peace and social harmony of life ;  
 Or taint your ancient sanctity of manners ?  
 What was my crime ? I could not bear to see  
 Your dignity debas'd, to see the rabble,  
 Tread on the reverend grey authority  
 Of senatorial wisdom : Yes, for you,  
 In your defence I did enrage this monster ;  
 And yet you basely left me to its fury.  
 'Then talk no more of services and friendship :  
 A friend who can, and does not shield, betrays me.  
 Or if the power was wanting, then your senate  
 Is sunk into servility and bondage,  
 Nor should a freeman deign to sit among you.

*Min.* The wisest are sometimes compell'd to yield  
 To popular storms : yet I defend not, *Marcus*,  
 Our timid conduct ; we have felt our error,  
 And now invite thee back to aid the senate,  
 With thy heroic spirit to restrain  
 The giddy rage of faction, and to hold  
 The reins of government more firm hereafter.

As to th' appeal which thou hast nobly made  
 In vindication of thy spotless fame,  
 With pleasure we confirm it, and bear witness  
 To all thy public and thy private virtues :  
 But let us also beg thee not to stain  
 The brightness of that glory by a crime,

Which

Which, unrepented, would disgrace them all,  
A dire rebellious war against thy country.

*Cor.* Absurd! What can you mean? To call a  
people,

Who with the last indignity have us'd me,  
To call my foes my country! No, *Minucius*,  
It is the generous nation of the *Volsci*,  
These brave, these virtuous men, you see around me.  
Who, when I wander'd a poor helpless exile,  
Took pity of my injuries and woes;  
Forgot the former mischiefs of my sword;  
Heap'd on me kindness, honours, dignities;  
Fear'd not to trust me with this high command,  
And plac'd me here the guardian of their cause:  
Be witness, *Jove*! — It is alone their nation  
I henceforth will acknowledge for my country!  
Let this suffice.— You have my answer, *Romans*.

*Com.* This answer, *Coriolanus*, is the dictate  
More of thy pride than magnanimity:  
'Tis thy revenge that gives it, not thy virtue.  
Art thou above the gods? who joy to show'r  
Their doubled goodness on repenting mortals?  
But think not I intend, by this, to urge  
Our profer'd peace, so harshly treated, further,  
That were a weakness ill becoming *Romans*.  
Yet I must tell thee, it would better suit  
A fierce despotic chief of barbarous slaves,  
Than the calm dignity of one who sits  
In the grave senate of a free republic,  
To talk so high, and as it were to thrust  
Plebeians from the native rights of man.—

*Cor.* Ha! dost thou come the people's advocate  
To me, *Cominius*? com'st thou to insult me!

*Com.* Nay, hear me, *Marcus*: — These grey hairs im-  
power me

To set thee right before this great assembly:

And there was once a time, thou wouldst have heard  
 Thy general with more deference and patience——  
 I tell thee then, whoe'er amidst the sons  
 Of reason, valour, liberty, and virtue,  
 Displays distinguish'd merit, is a noble  
 Of nature's own creating. Such have risen,  
 Sprung from the dust; or where had been our honours?  
 And such in radiant bands will rise again,  
 In yon immortal city, that when most  
 Deprest by fate and near apparent ruin,  
 Returns, as with an energy divine,  
 On her astonish'd foes and shakes them from her——  
 Your pardon *Volsi*——But this, *Coriolanus*,  
 Is what I had to say.

*Cor.*

And I have heard it——

*[Rising from his tribunal; and the  
 priests advancing to address him,  
 he prevents them.]*

For you, ye awful ministers of heaven,  
 Let me not hear your holy lips profan'd  
 By urging what my duty must refuse.  
 I bow in adoration to the gods;  
 I venerate their servants. But there is,  
 'T here is a power, their chief, their darling care,  
 The guardian of mankind, which to betray  
 Were violating all—And that is Justice.

So far my public character demands;  
 So far my honour.—Now, what should forbid  
 The man, and friend, to be indulg'd a little?

Permit me to embrace thee, good *Minucius*,  
 Thee, *Lartius*; you, *Pinnarius* and *Sulpitius*:  
 But chiefly thee, *Cominius*, who first rais'd me  
 To deeds of arms; who from thy consular brow  
 Took thy own crown, and with it circled mine.  
 Tho' nought can shake my purpose, yet I wish  
 That *Rome* had sent me others on this errand.

I thank



I thank you for your friendship. The protection,  
Which you have given to those, whom once I call'd  
By tender names, I would not now remember.

How shall I---say---return your generous goodness?

O there is nothing you, as friends, can ask,

My grateful heart will not with pleasure grant you.

*Com.* We thank thee, *Coriolanus*---But a *Roman*  
Disdains that favour you refuse his country.

*Cor.*

[*To the Volscian officers.*]

See that they be, with due regard and safety,  
Conducted back.

[*To the Roman senators.*]

I will suspend th' assault,

Till to these terms, of which we will not bate

The smallest part, your senate may have time

To send their latest answer. Then we cut

All further treaty off. *Romans*, farewell.

*End of the Third Act.*

A C T I V. S C E N E I.

TULLUS, *alone.*

**W**HAT is the mind of man? A restless scene  
Of vanity and weakness; shifting still,  
As shift the lights of our uncertain knowledge;  
Or as the various gale of passion breathes.

None ever thought himself more deeply founded  
On what is right, nor felt a nobler ardor,  
Than I, when I invested *Caius Marcius*  
With this ill-judg'd command. Now it appears  
Distraction, folly, monstrous folly! meanness:

Q5

And



And down I plunge, betray'd even by my virtue,  
From gulph to gulph, from shame to deeper shame.

## SCENE II.

TULLUS, GALEBUS.

*Gal.* I listen'd, *Tullus*, to th' important scene  
That lately pass'd before us, with most strict  
Unprejudic'd attention; and have since  
Revolv'd it in my mind, both as a man,  
Ally'd to all mankind, and as a *Volscian*.  
Indeed our terms are high, and by the manner  
In which they were prescrib'd by *Coriolanus*,  
Are what we cannot hope will e'er be granted.  
They should be soften'd. Let us yield a little,  
Conscious ourselves to a great nation's pride,  
The pride of human nature. Could the *Romans*  
Stoop to such peace, commanded by the sword,  
They then were slaves, unworthy our alliance.

*Tul.* Gods! do I hear in thee, one of the chiefs  
Intrusted with the honour of the *Volsci*,  
An advocate for *Rome*?

*Gal.* I glory, *Tullus*,  
To own myself an advocate for peace.  
Peace is the happy natural state of man;  
War his corruption, his disgrace——

*Tul.* His safeguard!  
His pride! his glory!---What but war, just war,  
Gave *Greece* her heroes? Those who drew the sword  
(As we do now) against the sons of rapine;  
To quell proud tyrants, and to free mankind.

*Gal.* Yes, *Tullus*, when to just defence the warrior  
Confines his force, he is a worship'd name,  
Dear to mankind, the first and best of mortals!

Yet

Yet still, if this can by soft means be done,  
 And fair accommodation, that is better.  
 Why should we purchase with the blood of thousands,  
 What may be gain'd by mutual just concession?  
 Why give up peace, the best of human blessings,  
 For the vain cruel pride of useless conquest?

*Tul.* These soothing dreams of philosophic quiet  
 Are only fit for unfrequented shades.  
 The sage should quit the busy bustling world  
 Ill suited to his gentle meditations,  
 And in some desert find that peace he loves.

*Gal.* Mistaken man! Philosophy consists not  
 In airy schemes, or idle speculations:  
 The rule and conduct of all social life  
 Is her great province. Not in lonely cells  
 Obscure she lurks, but holds her heavenly light  
 To senates and to kings, to guide their councils,  
 And teach them to reform and bless mankind.  
 All policy but her's is false and rotten;  
 All valour not conducted by her precepts  
 Is a destroying fury sent from hell  
 To plague unhappy man, and ruin nations.

*Tul.* To stop the waste of that destroying fury  
 Is the great cause and purpose of this war.  
 Art thou a friend to peace?---subdue the *Romans*.  
 Who, who, but they, have turn'd this ancient land,  
 Where, from *Saturnian* times, harmonious concord  
 Still lov'd to dwell, into a scene of blood,  
 Of endless discord, and perpetual rapine?  
 The sword, the vengeful sword, must drain away  
 This boiling blood, that thus disturbs the nations!  
 Talk not of terms. It is a vain attempt  
 To bind th' ambitious and unjust by treaties:  
 These they elude a thousand specious ways;  
 Or if they cannot find a fair pretext,  
 They blush not in the face of heaven to break them.

*Gal.*

*Gal.* Why then affronted heaven will combat for us.  
 Set justice on our side, and then my voice  
 Shall be as loud for war as thine; my sword  
 Shall strike as deep; at least my blood shall flow  
 As freely, *Tullus*, in my country's cause.  
 But as I then would die to serve the *Volsicians*,  
 So now I dare to serve them by opposing,  
 Even with my single voice, th' impetuous torrent  
 That hurries us away beyond the bounds  
 Of temperate wisdom; and presume to tell thee,  
 It is thy passion, not thy prudence dictates  
 This haughty language.

*Tul.* Yes, it is my passion,  
 A passion for the glory of my country,  
 That scorns your narrow views of timid prudence.  
 Our injur'd honour drew our swords, and never  
 Shall they be sheath'd while I command the *Volsicians*,  
 'Till *Rome* submits to *Antium*.----

*Gal.* *Rome* will perish  
 Ere she submit; and she has still her walls,  
 The strength of her allies, her native valour,  
 Which oft has sav'd her in the worst extremes,  
 And, stronger yet than all, despair, to aid her.

*Tul.* All these will nought avail her, if our fears  
 Come not to her assistance---But *Galesus*,  
 Why urge you this to me? Go, talk to *Marcins*.  
 The war has given him all his pride could hope for,  
 To see *Rome's* senate humbled at his feet:  
 He now may wish to reign in peace at *Antium*,  
 And thou, perhaps, art come an envoy from him,  
 To learn if I shall prove a quiet subject.

*Gal.* Thro this unguarded opening of thy soul,  
 I see what stings thee---Ah! beware of envy!  
 If that pale fury seize thee, thou art lost!  
*Tullus*, 'tis easier far, from the clear breast,  
 To keep out treacherous vice, than to expel it.

Farewel.

Farewel. Remember I have done my duty. [*Goes out.*]

*Tullus, alone.*

This man discerns my heart— Well : What of that ?  
 Am I afraid its movements should be seen ?  
 I, whose clear thoughts have never shunn'd the light,  
 Must I now seek to hide them ? O misfortune !  
 To have reduc'd myself to such a state,  
 So much beneath the greatness of my soul,  
 That, like a coward, I must learn to practise  
 The wretched arts of vile dissimulation !  
 By heaven I will not do t—I will not stoop  
 To veil my discontent a moment longer.  
 But see : my rival comes, the happy *Marcus*.  
 His haughty mien, his very looks, affront me.

### SCENE III.

CORIOLANUS, TULLUS.

*Cor.* *Tullus*, I have receiv'd intelligence,  
 That a strong body of the *Latin* troops  
 Is in full march to raise the siege of *Rome*.  
 Another day will bring them to its aid.  
 But go thou forth, and lead the valiant bands,  
 By thee commanded, to repel these succours.  
 Go, and cut off from *Rome* its last resource.

*Tul.* I lead my troops, from the great scene of action,  
 From falling *Rome*, which, ere to-morrow's sun  
 Shall set, may be our prey ! sure you forget  
 My rank and station — I disdain the service :  
 Give it to some you may command. For me,  
 I own no master but the *Volscian* states.  
*Rome* is my object. I from *Antium* brought  
 The noblest army ever shook her walls.  
 And shall I now, on that decisive day,

Doom'd



Doom'd by the gods to lay her pride in ashes,  
 Shall I be absent from the glorious work ?  
 It is the highest outrage even to think it. —  
 Just gods ! dost thou presume to give thy orders  
 To me ? to me ! thy equal in command ?  
 Nay, thy superior ? was it not my hand,  
 My lavish hand, bestow'd thy power upon thee ?  
 And know, proud *Roman*, that the man who gave it,  
 Can at his will resume it.

*Cor.*

I propos'd

This expedition to thee as thy friend,  
 Not as thy general, *Tullus*. We are both  
 Commanders here ; and for my share of Pow'r,  
 Whene'er the council of the *Volscian* states,  
 Who cloath'd me with it, shall again demand it,  
 I at their feet will lay it down, persuaded,  
 The canker'd tongue of envy's self must own,  
 That by my service I have well deserv'd it.

*Tul.* Was it to them, or me, you hither came  
 To crave protection ? Was not then your fortune,  
 Your liberty, your life, at my disposal ?  
 I rais'd you from the dust, a wretched exile,  
 An outcast, helpless, friendless, driven to beg,  
 The lowest refuge which despair can seek,  
 Shelter amidst thy foes. My pitying goodness  
 Protected, trusted, and believ'd you grateful.  
 O ill-plac'd confidence ! —

*Cor.*

Immortal gods !

Hear I these words from *Tullus* !

*Tul.*

What for all this

Is thy return ? Pride ; self-sufficiency ;  
 Councils apart from mine ; despotic orders ;  
 The glory of the war all pilfer'd from me :  
 And to complete the whole, a *Latin* army  
 Now conjur'd up to draw me from the siege ;  
 Till by cajoling our tame chiefs, and dazzling

The



The senseless eyes of the low mob of soldiers,  
Thou shalt be solely seated in the power  
Which, thank my folly ! now is shar'd betwixt us.

*Cor.* O indignation !---down, thou swelling heart---  
I will be calm---I will---Thou dost accuse me  
Of the worst vice than can debase mankind,  
Of black ingratitude. On what foundations ?  
What have I done to merit such a charge ?  
Is it my fault, if in the *Volsian* army  
My name is as rever'd and great as thine ?  
Can I forbid authority, and fame,  
To follow merit and success ?---You knew  
The man whom you employ'd, and should have known  
He would not be a cypher in employment.

*Tul.* Think'it thou my heart can better brook than  
thine

To be that cypher ! that dishonour'd tool !  
Subservient to th' ambition of another ?  
Gods ! I had rather live a drudging peasant,  
Unknown to glory, in some *Alpin* village ;  
Than at the head of these victorious legions,  
Bear the high name of chief, without the power.  
No, *Marcus*, no. I will command indeed :  
And thou shalt learn, with all the *Volsian* army  
To treat their general with respect.

*Cor.*

Respect !

O *Tullus* ! *Tullus* ! by the powers divine !  
I bore thee once respect, as high as man  
Can shew to man. From thee, my foe, my rival,  
I nor disdain'd nor fear'd to ask protection.  
You gave me all I ask'd, you gave me more,  
With noble warmth of heart ! which to esteem,  
Added the ties of gratitude, and friendship.  
Whatever since, in council, or in arms,  
Has been by me achiev'd, was done for thee.  
My glory all was thine. The palms I gain'd

Only

Only compos'd a garland for his brow,  
Who rais'd this banish'd man to tread on *Rome*.

*Tul.* To tread on him who rais'd him---That, I know,  
Is thy ambitious purpose ; but be certain,  
However *Rome* may bend beneath thy fortune,  
Thou shalt not find an easy conquest here.

*Cor.* May *Jove* with lightning strike me to the centre,  
If from the day I saw thy face at *Antium*,  
My heart has ever form'd one secret thought  
To hurt thy honour, or depress thy greatness :  
I was thy friend, thy soldier, and thy servant.  
But now I will as openly avow,  
Thy jealousy has, with envenom'd breath,  
Made such a sudden ravage in our friendship,  
I know not what to think.---

*Tul.* Think me thy foe.  
There is no lasting friendship with the proud.

*Cor.* Nor with the jealous---But of this enough.  
Come, let us turn our fire a nobler way :  
We have a worthier quarrel to pursue.---  
It were unjust, dishonourable, base,  
Our pride should hurt the *Volscian* cause.

*Tul.* No, *Marcus*.  
I mean to guard it better for the future :  
The *Volscian* cause is safest with a *Volscian*.  
I therefore claim, insist upon my right ;  
That you shall yield me my command in turn.  
The first attack was yours : 'Tis scanty justice,  
The second should be mine.

*Cor.* *Tullus*, 'tis yours.  
O it imports not which of us command !  
Give me the lowest rank among your troops :  
All *Italy* will know, the voice of fame  
Will tell all future times, that I was present ;  
That *Coriolanus* in the *Volscian* army  
Assisted, when imperial *Rome* was sack'd ;

That

That city which, while he maintain'd her cause,  
Invincible herself, made *Antium* tremble.

*Tul.* What arrogant presumption !

## SCENE IV.

*To them VOLUSIUS, entering hastily.*

*Tul.* Ha ! *Volusius*,  
Thy looks declare some message of importance.

*Vol.* *Tullus*, they do---I was to find thee, *Marcus*.  
To thee a second deputation comes,  
Thy mother, and thy wife, with a long train  
Of all the noblest ladies *Rome* can boast,  
In mourning habits clad, approach our camp,  
Preceded by a herald, to demand  
Another audience of thee.

*Cor.* How, *Volusius* !  
Said you, the *Roman* ladies ! Low, indeed,  
Must be the state of *Rome*, when thus her matrons  
She sends amidst the tumults of a camp,  
To beg protection for the men, who lie  
Trembling behind their ramparts---come ! once more !  
And see me put an end to prayers and treaty !

## SCENE V.

TULLUS, VOLUSIUS.

*Vol.* *Tullus*, 'tis well. This answers to my wishes.

*Tul.* How ? what is well ? that humbled *Rome* once more  
Shall deck him with the trophies of our arms ?

*Vol.* And hop'st thou nothing from this blest event ?  
They who have often blasted mighty heroes,  
Who oft have stolen into the firmest hearts,  
And melted them to folly ; they, my friend,

Will

Will do what wisdom never could effect.

*Tul.* Think st thou the prayers and tears of wailing women  
Can shake the man, who with such cold disdain  
Stood firm against those venerable consuls,  
And spurn'd the genius of his kneeling country?

*Vol.* It was his pride alone that made him ours.  
That passion kept him firm; the flattering charm  
Of humbling those, who in their persons bore  
The whole collected majesty of *Rome*.  
These women are no proper objects for it:  
He cannot triumph o'er his wife and mother.  
On this my hopes are founded, that these women  
May by their gentler influence subdue him.

*Tul.* Whate'er th' event, he shall no longer here,  
As wave his passions, dictate peace or war.  
Whether his stubborn soul maintains its firmness,  
Or yields to female prayers, the *Volscian* honour  
Will be alike betray'd. If *Rome* prevails,  
He stops our conquering arms from her destruction;  
If he rejects her suit, he reigns our tyrant.  
But, by th' immortal gods! his short-liv'd empire  
Shall never see yon radiant sun descend.

*Vol.* Blest be those gods that have at last inspir'd thee  
With resolution equal to thy cause,  
The cause of liberty!—

*Tul.* Be sure, *Volusus*,  
If that should happen which thy hopes portend;  
Should he, by nature tam'd, disarm'd by love,  
Respite the *Roman* doom—He seals his own:  
By heaven! he dies.

*Vol.* Let me embrace thee, *Tullus*!  
Now breaking from the cloud, which, like the sun,  
Thy own too bounteous beams had drawn around thee.

*Tul.* You was deceiv'd, my friend. When I with tameness,  
With tameness which astonish'd thy brave spirit,  
Seem'd to submit to that unequal sway

He



He arrogated o'er me ; know my heart  
 Ne'er swell'd so high as in that cruel moment.  
 My indignation, like the imprison'd fire  
 Pent in the troubled breast of glowing *Ætna*,  
 Burnt deep and silent : But, collected now,  
 It shall beneath its fury bury *Marcus* !  
 'Tis fixt. Our tyrant dies.

*Vol.* *Tullus*, my sword  
 Here claims to be employ'd---Nor mine alone---  
 There are some worthy *Volsci* still remaining,  
 Who think with us, and pine beneath the laurels  
 A *Roman* chief bestows.

*Tul.* Go, find them strait,  
 And bring them to the space before his tent ;  
 'Tis there he will receive this deputation.  
 Then if he sinks beneath these womens prayers---  
 Or if he does not---But, *Volusius*, wait,  
 I give thee strictest charge to wait my signal.  
 Perhaps I may find means to free the *Volsci*  
 Without his blood. If not---We will be free.

*The End of the fourth Act.*

A C T V. S C E N E I.

*Trumpets sounding.*

*The scene discovers the camp, a croud of Volscian officers with files of soldiers, drawn up as before. Enter Coriolanus, Tullus, Galesus, Volusius. The Roman ladies advance slowly from the depth of the stage, with Veturia the mother of Coriolanus, and Volumnia his wife at their head, all clad in habits of mourning. Coriolanus stands at the head of the Volsci, surrounded by his lictors; but when he perceives*



*ceives his mother and wife, after some struggle, he advances, and goes hastily to embrace them.*

CORIANANUS *advancing.*

**L**ower your fasces, liſtors——  
Oh *Veturia*!

Thou beſt of parents!

*Vet.*

*Coriolanus, ſtop.*

Whom am I to embrace? A ſon, or foe?

Say, in what light am I regarded here?

Thy mother, or thy captive?

*Cor.*

Juſtly, madam,

You check my fondneſs, that, by nature hurry'd,

Forgot I was the general of the *Volſci*,

And you a deputy from hoſtile *Rome*.

*[He goes back to his former ſtation.]*

I hear you with reſpect. Speak your commiſſion.

*Vet.* Think not I come a deputy from *Rome*.

*Rome*, once rejected, ſcorns a ſecond ſuit.

You have already heard what'er the tongue

Of eloquence can plead, whate'er the wiſdom

Of ſacred age, the dignity of ſenates,

And virtue, can enforce. Behold me here,

Sent by the ſhades of your immortal fathers,

Sent by the genius of the *Marcian* line,

Commiſſion'd by my own maternal heart,

To try the ſoft, yet ſtronger powers of nature.

Thus authoriz'd, I aſk, nay, claim a peace,

On equal, fair, and honourable terms,

To thee, to *Rome*, and to the *Volſcian* people.

Grant it, my ſon! Thy mother begs it of thee,

Thy wife, the beſt, the kindeſt of her ſex,

And theſe illuſtrious matrons, who have ſooth'd

The gloomy hours thou haſt been abſent from us.

*We,*

We, by whate'er is great and good in nature,  
By every duty, by the gods, conjure thee !  
To grant us peace, and turn on other foes  
Thy arms, where thou may'st purchase virtuous glory.

*Cor.* I should, *Veturia*, break those holy bonds  
That hold the wide republic of mankind,  
Society, together ; I should grow  
A wretch, unworthy to be call'd thy son ;  
I should, with my *Volumnia*'s fair esteem,  
Forfeit her love ; these matrons would despise me —  
Could I betray the *Volscian* cause, thus trusted,  
Thus recommended to me — No, my mother,  
You cannot sure, you cannot ask it of me !

*Vet.* And does my son so little know me ? me !  
Who took such care to form his tender years,  
Left to my conduct by his dying father ?  
Have I so ill deserv'd that trust ? alas !  
Am I so low in thy esteem, that thou  
Should'st e'er imagine I could urge a part  
Which in the least might stain the *Marcian* honour ?  
No, let me perish rather ! perish all !  
Life has no charms compar'd with spotless glory !  
I only ask, thou would'st forbid thy troops  
To waste our lands, and to assault yon city,  
Till time be given for mild and righteous measures.  
Grant us but one year's truce : mean while thou may'st  
With honour and advantage to both nations,  
Betwixt us mediate a perpetual peace.

*Cor.* Alas ! my mother ! That were granting all.

*Vet.* Canst thou refuse me such a just petition,  
The first request thy mother ever made thee ?  
Canst thou to her intreaties, prayers, and tears,  
Prefer a savage obstinate revenge ?  
Have love and nature lost all power within thee ?

*Cor.* No, — in my heart they reign as strong as ever.  
Come, I conjure you, quit ungrateful *Rome*,  
Come, and complete my happiness at *Antium*,

You,

You, and my dear *Volumnia*—There, *Veturia*,  
There shall you see with what respect the *Volsci*  
Will treat the wife and mother of their general.

*Vet.* Treat me thyself with more respect, my son;  
Nor dare to shock my ears with such proposals.

Shall I desert my country, I who come  
To plead her cause? Ah no!—A grave in *Rome*  
Would better please me, than a throne at *Antium*.

How hast thou thus forsaken all my precepts?

How hast thou thus forgot thy love to *Rome*?

O *Coriolanus*, when with hostile arms,

With fire and sword, you enter'd on our borders,

Did not the fostering air, that breathes around us,

Allay thy guilty fury, and instil

A certain native sweetness thro thy soul?

Did not your heart thus murmur to itself?

“ These walls contain whatever can command

“ Respect from virtue, or is dear to nature,

“ The monuments of piety and valour,

“ The sculptur'd forms, the trophies of my fathers,

“ My household gods, my mother, wife and children!”

*Cor.* Ah! you seduce me with too tender views!—

These walls contain the most corrupt of men,

A base seditious herd; who trample order,

Distinction, justice, laws, beneath their feet,

Insolent foes to worth, the foes of virtue!

*Vet.* Thou hast not thence a right to lift thy hand

Against the whole community, which forms

Thy ever-sacred country—That consists

Not of coeval citizens alone:

It knows no bounds; it has a retrospect

To ages past; it looks on those to come;

And grasps of all the general worth and virtue.

Suppose, my son, that I to thee had been

A harsh obdurate parent, even unjust:

How

How would the monstrous thought with horror strike thee,

Of plunging, from revenge, thy raging steel  
Into her breast, who nurs'd thy infant years!—

*Cor.* *Rome* is no more! that *Rome* which nurs'd my youth;

That *Rome*, conducted by *Patrician* virtue,  
She is no more! My sword shall now chastise  
The sons of pride and dirt! Her upstart tyrants!  
Who have debas'd the noblest state on earth  
Into a fordid democratic faction.

Why will my mother join her cause to theirs?

*Vet.* Forbid it, *Jove*! that I should e'er distinguish  
My interest from the general cause of *Rome*;  
Or live to see a foreign hostile arm  
Reform th' abuses of our land of freedom.

[*Pausing.*

But 'tis in vain, I find, to reason more.  
Is there no way to reach thy filial heart,  
Once fam'd as much for piety as courage?  
Oft hast thou justly triumph'd *Coriolanus*;  
Now yield one triumph to thy widow'd mother;  
And send me back amidst the loud acclaims,  
The grateful transports of deliver'd *Rome*,  
The happiest far, the most renown'd of women!

*Cor.* Why, why, *Veturia*, wilt thou plead in vain?

[*TULLUS. Aside to VOLUSIUS.*

See, see, *Volusius*, how the strong emotions  
Of powerful nature shake his inmost soul!  
See how they tear him.—If he long resists them,  
He is a god, or something worse than man.

*Vet.* O *Marcus*, *Marcus*! canst thou treat me thus?  
Canst thou complain of *Rome*'s ingratitude,  
Yet be to me so cruelly ungrateful?  
To me! who anxious rear'd thy youth to glory?  
Whose only joy, these many years, has been,

To



To boast that *Coriolanus* was my son ?  
 And dost thou then renounce me for thy mother ?  
 Spurn me before these chiefs, before those soldiers,  
 That weep thy stubborn cruelty ? Art thou  
 The hardest man to me in this assembly ?  
 Look at me ! Speak !

[*Pausing, during which he appears in great agitation.*

Still dost thou turn away ?  
 Inexorable ? silent ?——Then, behold me,  
 Behold thy mother, at whose feet thou oft  
 Hast kneel'd with fondness, kneeling now at thine,  
 Wetting thy stern tribunal with her tears.

*Coriolanus raises her.*

*Veturia, rise.* I cannot see thee thus.  
 It is a sight uncomely, to behold  
 My mother at my feet, and that to urge  
 A suit, relentless honour must refuse.

*Volumnia advancing.*

Since, *Coriolanus*, thou dost still retain,  
 In spite of all thy mother now has pleaded,  
 Thy dreadful purpose, ah ! how much in vain  
 Were it for me to join my supplications !  
 The voice of thy *Volumnia*, once so pleasing ;  
 How shall it hope to touch the husband's heart,  
 When proof against the tears of such a parent ?  
 I dare not urge what to thy mother thou  
 So firmly hast deny'd——But I must weep——  
 Must weep, if not thy harsh severity,  
 At least thy situation. O permit me

[*Taking his hand.*

To shed my gushing tears upon thy hand !  
 To press it with the cordial lips of love !  
 And take my last farewell !

*Cor.*

Yet, yet, my soul,

Be firm, persevere——



*Vol.**Ah Coriolanus !*

Is then this hand, this hand to me devoted,  
 'The pledge of nuptial love, that has so long  
 Protected, blest'd, and shelter'd us with kindness,  
 Now lifted up against us ? Yet I love it,  
 And with submissive veneration, bow  
 Beneath th' affliction which it heaps upon us.  
 But O ! what nobler transports would it give thee !  
 What joy beyond expression ! couldst thou once  
 Surmount the furious storm of fierce revenge,  
 And yield thee to the charms of love and mercy.  
 Oh make the glorious trial !

*Cor.**Mother ! wife !*

Are all the powers of nature leagu'd against me ?  
 I cannot ! — will not ! — Leave me, my *Volumnia* !

*Vol.* Well, I obey — How bitter thus to part !

Upon such terms to part ! perhaps for ever ! —  
 But tell me, ere I hence unroot my feet,  
 When to my lonely home I shall return,  
 What from their father, to our little slaves,  
 Unconscious of the shame to which you doom them,  
 What shall I say ?

*[Pausing ; He highly agitated.**Nay, tell me, Coriolanus !*

*Cor.* Tell thee ! What shall I tell thee ? See these  
 tears !

These tears will tell thee what exceeds the power  
 Of words to speak, whate'er the son, the husband,  
 And father, in one complicated pang,  
 Can feel — But leave me ; — even in pity leave me !  
 Cease, cease, to torture me, my dear *Volumnia* !  
 You only tear my heart ; but cannot shake it :  
 For by th' immortal gods, the dread avengers  
 Of broken faith ! —

*Vol. kneeling.]**O swear not, Coriolanus !*

Oh vow not our destruction !

*Vet.**Daughter, rise.*

VOL. II.

R

Let

Let us no more before the *Volscian* people  
 Expose ourselves a spectacle of shame.  
 It is in vain we try to melt a breast,  
 That to the best affections nature gives us,  
 Prefers the worst. Hear me, proud man ! I have  
 A heart as stout as thine. I came not hither,  
 To be sent back rejected, baffled, sham'd,  
 Hateful to *Rome*, because I am thy mother :  
 A *Roman* matron knows, in such extremes,  
 What part to take——And thus I came provided.

[Drawing from under her robe a dagger.

Go ! barbarous son ! go ! double parricide !  
 Rush o'er my corse to thy belov'd revenge !  
 Tread on the bleeding breast of her, to whom  
 Thou ow'st thy life !——Lo, thy first victim !

*Cor.*

Ha ! [Seizing her hand.

What dost thou mean ?

*Vet.*

To die, while *Rome* is free,  
 To seize the moment ere thou art her tyrant.

*Cor.* O use thy power more justly ! Set not thus  
 My treacherous heart in arms against my reason.  
 Here ! here ! thy dagger will be well employ'd ;  
 Strike here ! and reconcile my fighting duties.

*Vet.* Off !—Set me free !—Think'st thou that grasp,  
 which binds

My feeble hand, can fetter too my will ?  
 No, my proud son ! Thou canst not make me live,  
 If *Rome* must fall ! - No pow'r on earth can do it !

*Cor.* Pity me, generous *Volsci*—You are men——  
 Must it then be ?—Confusion !---Do I yield ?  
 What is it ? Is it weakness ? Is it virtue ?——  
 Well !——

*Vet.* What ? Speak !

*Cor.*

O, no !——my stifled words refuse  
 A passage to the throes that wring my heart.

*Vet.* Nay, if thou yieldest, yield like *Coriolanus* ;  
 And what thou do'st, do nobly !

*Cor.*

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*Cor. quitting her hand.]* There!—'Tis done!---  
Thine is the triumph, nature! *[To VETURIA in a low tone of voice.*

*Ah Veturia!*

*Rome* by thy aid is sav'd—but thy son lost.

*Vet.* He never can be lost who saves his country.

*Cor. Turning to the Roman ladies.]* Ye matrons, guardians of the *Roman* safety,

You to the senate may report this answer.

We grant the truce you ask. But on these terms:

That *Rome*, mean-time shall to a peace agree,

Fair, equal, just, and such as may secure

The safety, rights, and honour of the *Volsci*.

*[To the troops.*

*Volsci,* We raise the siege. Go, and prepare,

By the first dawn, for your return to *Antium*.

*[As the troops retire, Coriolanus turns to the Roman Ladies;*

*Tul. To Volufius aside.]* 'Tis as we wish'd, *Volufius*---

To your station.

But mark me well---Till thou shalt hear my call,

I charge thee not to stir. One offer more

My honour bids me make to this proud man,

Before we strike the blow---If he rejects it,

His blood be on his head.

*Vol.*

Well! I obey you.

*[He goes out.*

*Cor.* Be it thy care, *Galefus*, that a safeguard  
Attend these noble matrons back to *Rome*.

## SCENE II.

CORIOLANUS, TULLUS.

*Cor.* I plainly, *Tullus*, by your looks discern  
You disapprove my conduct.

*Tul.*

*Caius Marcius,*

I mean not to assail thee with the clamour  
Of loud reproaches, and the war of words ;  
But, pride apart, and all that can pervert  
The light of steady reason, here to make  
A candid fair proposal.

*Cor.*

Speak. I hear thee.

*Tul.* I need not tell thee, that I have perform'd  
My utmost promise. Thou hast been protect'd ;  
Hast had thy amplest, most ambitious wish :  
Thy wounded pride is heal'd, thy dear revenge  
Completely sated ; and, to crown thy fortune,  
At the same time, thy peace with *Rome* restor'd.  
Thou art no more a *Volsian*, but a *Roman*.  
Return, return ; thy duty calls upon thee,  
Still to protect the city thou hast sav'd :  
It still may be in danger from our arms.

*Cor.* Insolent man, Is this thy fair proposal ?

*Tul.* Be patient---Hear me speak---I have already  
From *Rome* protect'd thee ; now from the *Volsi*,  
From their just vengeance, I will still protect thee.  
Retire. I will take care thou may'st with safety.

*Cor.* With safety !---Heav'ns !---And think'st thou,

*Coriolanus*

Will stoop to thee for safety ?---No ! my safeguard  
Is in myself, a bosom void of blame,  
And the great gods, protectors of the just.---  
O'tis an act of cowardice and baseness,  
To seize the very time my hands were fetter'd,

By



By the strong chain of former obligations,  
The safe sure moment to insult me.---Gods!  
Were I now free, as on that day I was,  
When at *Corioli* I tam'd thy pride,  
This had not been.

*Tul.* Thou speak'st the truth: It had not.  
O for that time again! Propitious gods,  
If you will bless me, grant it!---Know, for that,  
For that dear purpose, I have now propos'd  
Thou should'st return. I pray thee, *Marcus*, do it!  
And we shall meet again on nobler terms.

*Cor.* When to the *Volsi* I have clear'd my faith,  
Doubt not I shall find means to meet thee nobly.  
We then our generous quarrel may decide  
In the bright front of some imbattel'd field,  
And not in private brawls, like fierce barbarians.

*Tul.* Thou canst not hope acquittal from the *Volsi*.---

*Cor.* I do:---Nay more, expect their approbation,  
Their thanks! I will obtain them such a peace  
As thou durst never ask; a perfect union  
Of their whole nation with imperial *Rome*  
In all her privileges, all her rights.  
By the just gods, I will! What would'st thou more?

*Tul.* What would I more! Proud *Roman*; This I  
would;

Fire the curst forest where these *Roman* wolves  
Haunt and infest their nobler neighbours round them;  
Extirpate from the bosom of this land,  
A false perfidious people, who, beneath  
The mask of freedom, are a combination  
Against the liberty of human-kind,  
The genuine seed of outlaws and of robbers.

*Cor.* The seed of gods!---'Tis not for thee, vain  
boaster!

'Tis not for such as thou, so often spar'd  
By her victorious sword, to talk of *Rome*.

But with respect and awful veneration.  
 Whate'er her blots, whate'er her giddy factions,  
 There is more virtue in one single year  
 Of *Roman* story, than your *Volscian* annals  
 Can boast thro' all your creeping dark duration !

*Tul.* I thank thy rage. This full displays the traitor.

*Cor.* Ha ! traitor !

*Tul.* First, to thy own country, traitor !  
 And traitor, now to mine !

*Cor.* Ye heavenly powers !  
 I shall break loose---my rage---But let us part---  
 Lest my rash hand should do a hasty deed  
 My cooler thought forbids.

*Tul.* Begone---Return---  
 To head the *Roman* troops. I grant thee quittance  
 Full and compleat of all those obligations  
 Thou hast so oft insultingly complain'd  
 Fetter'd thy hands. They now are free. I court  
 The worst thy sword can do ; whilst thou from me  
 Hast nothing to expect, but sure destruction.  
 Quit then this hostile camp. Once more I tell thee,  
 Thou art not here one single hour in safety.

*Cor.* Think'st thou to fright me hence ?

*Tul.* Thou wilt not then ?  
 Thou wilt not take the safety which I offer ?

*Cor.* Till I have clear'd my honour in your council,  
 And prov'd before them all, to thy confusion,  
 The falshood of thy charge ; as soon in battle  
 I would before thee fly, and howl for mercy,  
 As quit the station they have here assign'd me.

*Tul.* *Volufius* ! Hoa !

SCENE

S C E N E I I I.

*To them Volufius, and conspirators, with their fwords drawn.*

*Tul.* Seize and fecure the traitor !

*Cor.* [*Laying his hand upon his fword.*

Who dares approach me, dies !

*Vol.* Die thou !

[*As Coriolanus draws his fword, Volufius and the conspirators rufh upon and flab him. Tullus flanding by without having drawn his fword.*

*Cor.* [*Endeavouring to free himfelf.*

Off !---Villains !

[*Falling.*

Oh murdering flaves ! Affaffinating cowards !

[*Dies.*

S C E N E I V.

[*Upon the noife of the tumult, enter haftily to them Galfus, the other deputies of the Volfcian flates, officers friends of Coriolanus, and Titus with a large band of foldiers.*

*Gal.* [*As he enters.*

Are we a nation rul'd by laws, or fury ?

How ! whence this tumult ?— [*Paufing.*

Gods ! what do I fee ?

The noble *Marcus* flain !

*Tul.* You fee a traitor

Punish'd as he deferv'd, the *Roman* yoke

That thrall'd us broken, and the *Volsci* free.

*Gal.* Hear me, great *Jove* ! Hear, all, you injur'd powers

Of

Of friendship, hospitality and faith !  
 By that heroic blood, which from the ground  
 Reeking to you for vengeance cries, I swear !  
 This impious breach of your eternal laws,  
 This daring outrage on the *Volscian* honour,  
 Shall find in me a rigorous avenger !  
 On the same earth, polluted by their crime,  
 I will not live with these unpunish'd ruffians !

*Tul.* This deed is mine : I claim it all !—These men,  
 These valiant men, were but my instruments,  
 To punish him who to our face betray'd us.  
 We shall not fear to answer to the *Volsci*,  
 In a full council of the states at *Antium*,  
 The glorious charge of having stabb'd their traitor !

*Gal. Titus*, till then secure them.

[*Tullus and conspirators are led off.*

[*Galesus, standing over the body of Coriolanus,*  
*after a short pause, proceeds.*

*Volscian fathers,*

And ye brave soldiers, see an awful scene,  
 Demanding serious solemn meditation.  
 This man was once the glory of his age,  
 Disinterested, just, with every virtue  
 Of civil life adorn'd, in arms unequall'd.  
 His only blot was this ; that, much provok'd,  
 He rais'd his vengeful arm against his country.  
 And, lo ! the righteous gods have now chastis'd him,  
 Even by the hands of those for whom he fought.

Whatever private views and passions plead,  
 No cause can justify so black a deed ;  
 These, when the angry tempest clouds the soul,  
 May darken reason, and her course controul ;  
 But when the prospect clears, her startled eye  
 Must from the treacherous gulph with horror fly,



On whose wild wave, by stormy passions tost,  
So many hapless wretches have been lost.  
Then be this truth the star by which we steer,  
*Above ourselves our COUNTRY should be dear.*

*End of the Fifth Act.*

EPILOGUE.

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# EPILOGUE.

Spoken by

Mrs. *W O F F I N G T O N*.

**W**ELL! Gentlemen! and are you still so vain  
To treat our sex with arrogant disdain;  
And think, to you alone by partial heav'n  
Superior sense and sovereign power are given,  
When in the story told to-night, you find,  
With what a boundless sway we rule the mind,  
And, by a few soft words of ours, with ease,  
Can turn the proudest hearts just where we please?  
If an old mother had such pow'rful charms,  
To stop a stubborn Roman's conquering arms,—  
Soldiers and statesmen of these days, with you  
What think you wou'd a fair young Mistress do?  
If with my grave discourse, and wrinkled face,  
I thus could bring a hero to disgrace,  
How absolutely may I hope to reign  
Now I am turn'd to my own shape again!  
However, I will use my empire well;  
And, if I have a certain magic spell  
Or in my tongue, or wit, or shape, or eyes,  
Which can subdue the strong, and fool the wise,

*Be*

## EPILOGUE.

*Be not alarm'd: I will not interfere  
In state-affairs, nor undertake to steer  
The helm of government,—as we are told  
Those female politicians did of old:  
Such dangerous heights I never wish'd to climb——  
Thank heav'n I better can employ my time——  
Ask you to what my pow'r I shall apply?  
To make my subjects blest, is my reply.  
My purposes are gracious all, and kind,  
Some may be told—and some may be divin'd:  
One, which at present I have most at heart,  
To you without reserve I will impart:  
It is my sovereign will,—Hear, and obey,——  
That you with candour treat this Orphan Play.*

*End of the Second Volume.*

